IN OLD BELLAIRE

MARY DILLON

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IN OLD BELLAIRE

"'Permit me to relieve you of that heavy bag.'"

IN OLD BELLAIRE

BY

MARY DILLON

AUTHOR OF "THE ROSE OF OLD ST. LOUIS"

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS
BY C. M. RELYEA

NEW YORK
THE CENTURY CO.
1906

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Published January, 1906

THE DEVINNE PRESS

TO THE

DESCENDANTS OF DR. AND MRS. CHARLTON

TO THE SECOND AND THIRD GENERATION,

AND TO THOSE STILL LIVING WHO KNEW AND

LOVED THEM BOTH IN THE GOLDEN DAYS

OF OLD BELLAIRE, THIS STORY

IS AFFECTIONATELY

DEDICATED

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IN OLD BELLAIRE

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CHAPTER I

AN ARRIVAL

BELLAIRE is, or was when I knew it, a most charmingly quaint old town, half old English and half very old German, with the most delightfully aristocratic and exclusive society. Not that the town seemed quaint to me then, or the society remarkable: I had never known any other. But I have lived in many places since, and I have known many kinds of people, and I have come to think that none of them can compare with Bellaire or Bellairians in the sixties.

The college people held undisputed sway in west end, where Old Tomlinson, as we loved to call her, sat gray with her hundred years beneath the shade of her spreading maples and lindens, while the army people dominated the eastern end, in the fine old barracks built of yellow brick, brought over for the purpose by the English before the Revolution. Those of you who go to Bellaire now have no idea how beautiful the old barracks were before that summer of '63,

when they were burned by Fitzhugh Lee, the stately trees mutilated or entirely cut down, and the velvet lawns trampled into mire, never to be restored to their former perfection.

From the barracks to the college stretched the long Main Street, where society proper dwelt. Not to inhabit one of the substantial dwellings planted firmly on the brick sidewalk of that thoroughfare was almost to be ostracized in Bellaire society. There were other residence streets and other residences, on Portland, Langdon, and Harcourt, for instance, perhaps quite as fine as anything Main could boast; but Main Street residents either pitied or patronized or entirely ignored their less fortunate neighbors. On the other hand, the young women whose hard lot doomed them to dwell on the "back" streets eagerly cultivated their Main Street friends, that they might have a stoop whereon to sit on pleasant summer mornings or cool summer evenings; for the great dissipation of Bellaire was to watch the trains come in from Henrysburg and Marystown at ten in the morning and six in the afternoon. The track passed the whole length of Main Street, and the station was in the old Mansion House in the very heart of the town, and a little before train-time every stoop was filled with pretty maidens in the freshest and daintiest of summer lawns and linens.

It was not the trains, however, that was so much the attraction, though their coming was always an excitement in that quiet town, with the arrivals and departures to be commented upon—it was not so much

the trains, I think, as what followed. For very shortly after their arrival, from the east end of town came the dashing cavalry officers after their mail; and as they always came before the slow old postmaster and his assistants had distributed it (nothing was ever done in a hurry in Bellaire), they employed the waiting interval either in making informal calls at the most popular stoops, or in displaying their fine horsemanship and finer horses by racing from one end of the town to the other, sure of admiring glances from many bright eyes.

Then, besides the officers from the east end were the students from the west end, coming down the street in twos or threes or larger numbers after their mail, and stopping at their favorite stoops—generally not the ones the officers patronized—until Main Street, or at least the two blocks from Harcourt to College, would have impressed a stranger with the idea that he had lighted upon a midsummer festival or open-air reception.

Those were halcyon days, but they belong to the golden past. The cavalry school, with its dashing young officers, was removed soon after the close of the war, and I fancy society in Bellaire has never ceased to mourn their loss. To be sure, the students are left; but I have been back to Bellaire several times in the last thirty years, and I have thought the class of students changed. They seem so much younger, and not half so handsome, chivalrous, and high-toned as the young heroes of my girlhood. Possibly the Bellaire girls of to-day would not agree with me; but I can-

not help feeling a little sorry for them, that they can never know what a fine set of young fellows *our* Toms and Dicks and Harrys were.

It was five minutes to ten o'clock on the fifth of September, 1860, when a group was gathered on the door-step of the Burton mansion, momentarily expecting the whistle of the Henrysburg train. It was a few minutes late; the train from Marystown was already on the siding in front of the campus, puffing and blowing, as it impatiently waited its turn to run into the station after the passing of its consort.

It was a perfect September day, and the whole Northumberland valley lay basking under an Italian sky. The town itself was gently simmering in the torrid blaze, but its magnificent elms and maples had not then been cut down to barricade against Lee's cavalry, and there was plenty of cool green shade to moderate the hot glare reflected from brick walls and brick sidewalks.

We were proud of the Burton mansion. I have no doubt that its double flight of stone steps, protected by iron railings, rising in symmetrical curves to meet the white-pillared porch, would be called Old Colonial now; but I do not remember that in those days we had ever heard of Old Colonial, and we thought it simply a very fine house, to be pointed out with pride to our chance guests as a fitting residence for one of our oldest families.

The Burtons were acknowledged leaders in style. Nobody who made any pretensions to fashion or taste

thought of getting their new bonnets or frocks until after the return of the Misses Burton from their two months' sojourn in Philadelphia, spent among their grand relations on Spruce and Walnut streets. To be sure, it sometimes made us a little late with our winter wardrobes, for they often did not get home until Christmas; but we would have worn our old clothes all winter rather than have suffered the mortification of not having our new ones as exact copies of the Philadelphia toilets as our country milliners and dressmakers could manage.

On this September morning there were on the Burton porch and steps—besides Miss Sallie Burton and her younger sister, Miss Mazie—their cousin, the beautiful Miss Marcia Morris, and Miss Lydia McNair, a dashing belle of the army set, on the friendliest terms with all the officers, but not disdaining also to reckon a young collegian or two in her train.

She was sitting now on one of the lower steps of the curved flight, talking to a handsome young lieutenant, who had dismounted and was holding his horse by the bridle, which required his standing near the curb, and necessitated Miss Lydia raising her voice more than was considered quite proper in staid Bellaire. But Miss Lydia had little regard for small conventions. She rather liked to talk loud and laugh loud, if occasion permitted. The men all liked her, and so did some of the women, and the rest tolerated her for the sake of the men, and because no

bluer blood could be found in Pennsylvania than flowed in the veins of the McNairs.

By her side stood Rex McAllister, a South Carolinian, and the beau and exquisite of the college. In those days the old college drew its patronage almost entirely from the South: Maryland and Virginia, the Eastern Shore, the two Carolinas, Georgia, and even occasionally Alabama and Mississippi, sent their sons to its venerable halls. The modest little college has perhaps no exalted reputation in the East and North, but among Southerners of the passing generation, or the little remnant of it left by that terrible war, it is not unknown to fame. They were fine fellows as I remember them, those ardent, hot-headed Southerners, with the most beautiful manners in the world; and if they had any vices, they kept them decorously out of sight, so that the recipients of their devotion were at liberty to give full rein to their imaginations and endow them with all the heroic virtues.

Rex McAllister stood with one slender, arched foot, incased in a closely fitting boot of calf, resting on the lower step as he alternately looked up to utter some pretty compliment to Miss Morris on the upper step, or down to answer some saucy speech of Miss Lydia's. The attitude showed to advantage his tall, slender figure, his shoulders, built squarely out by careful padding to suit the taste of the day, and his long coat, of finest broadcloth, almost sweeping the ground as he stood, buttoned closely about a waist that his envious admirers said could have been reduced to

such ladylike dimensions only by steels and lacers. In one hand he twirled a slender ebony cane, surmounted by a shapely leg and foot in ivory, and in the other he held his broad palmetto hat, removed out of deference to the ladies or because of the intense heat, or perhaps to display to better advantage the coal-black curls, not too closely cropped, whose moderate gloss, and the delicate perfume they exhaled, showed that he had a finer taste in hair-oils than many of the men of that day. His Byronic collar, neither stiff nor glossy, and his loosely tied bow with uneven ends, were the only careless points in his dress; and no one could doubt for a moment that this was a studied neglect to heighten the resemblance to the poet that the flashing black eyes and smoothly shaven face rendered sufficiently obvious to the most casual glance.

Miss Lydia's loud talking and laughing had annoyed his somewhat punctilious ideas of propriety, and he was rather pointedly devoting himself to Miss Marcia, whose manners were as faultless as her face, when a specially loud burst of laughter drew the attention of the whole party to Miss Lydia. Her hands were clasping her round waist, her head thrown back, her eyes tightly closed, her shapely mouth open, disclosing two rows of white teeth, between which rolled a quick succession of merry peals. She was in the very agonies of mirth. The lieutenant stood regarding her with anything but a mirthful glance, a deep flush of anger or mortification rising to the very roots of his closely cropped military hair, and

one hand pulling savagely at his fierce cavalry mustache. Everybody gazed at her for a moment in dumb astonishment, and then Miss Sallie Burton called down from the vestibule step:

"Why, Lyd McNair, what *is* the matter?"

And Miss Marcia said coldly: "You might at least let us share your fun, Lydia."

To both of which speeches Miss Lydia responded only by swaying back and forth and by renewed peals of laughter.

"You will have to enlighten us, Lieutenant Watson," said Rex McAllister, turning to the officer, who now seemed undetermined whether to mount his horse and leave Miss Lydia to recover at her leisure, or to await the apology he considered due him.

He answered stiffly: "You must ask Miss McNair; she is pleased to be merry this morning. That is all I know."

"Oh—I—*beg* your pardon," gasped Miss Lydia; "but you—are—*too* funny," and she was again seized with a spasm that threatened to be hysterical.

McAllister suddenly broke the perplexed silence of the others:

"By Hercules! here comes Dr. Charlton post-haste. Do you suppose he is after me? Can't you hide me somewhere, Miss Burton?"

The college bell was ringing the ten-o'clock hour, and McAllister was due at a recitation in "Paley's Evidences" to the doctor, which he had just announced his intention of cutting.

His exclamation had an electrical effect upon Miss

Lydia. She sat erect at once, her hands dropped demurely in her lap, her mouth shut, her eyes wide open.

"Do you think he saw me?" she said in an awe-struck whisper to McAllister, who was as astonished at her sudden recovery as he had been at her seizure.

There was one being in the world for whom Lydia McNair entertained the profoundest reverence, and he was at that moment coming down the street, his old-fashioned and somewhat rusty swallow-tailed coat flying open to disclose a flowered-satin waistcoat, the tails streaming behind him with the rapidity of his progress, his high black-silk stock slightly awry, his black beaver hat pushed a little back, his slight figure bent eagerly forward, his gold-headed cane grasped belligerently in his hand, his pale, scholarly face flushed with his unusual exertion. In fact, the dignified doctor was evidently in a tremendous hurry, and, absorbed by one idea, perfectly oblivious of the ridiculous figure he made. The group on the steps now saw something to laugh at, and were inclined to emulate Miss Lydia's example, but Miss Lydia herself was rigidly sober.

The train was overdue, but its whistle had been heard from the bridge at the lower end of Main Street, and now the rolling smoke was visible through the trees of the Square, and the ringing of the bell and the puffing of the engine were plainly audible.

"He is going to take the train, and thinks he is late," murmured Miss Lydia.

At that moment the doctor came abreast of the lit-

tle party and became conscious of two things: one was that the train had not yet arrived and he was in time, and the other that his undignified haste was affording amusement and comment to a select group of Bellaire's *haut ton*. He drew himself erect, lowered his cane, pulled forward his hat, and stopped. The two ends of his black stock still fluttered beneath his left ear, but he had not been aware of their disarrangement, and so was calmly unconscious of them. The tails of his coat gently subsided from their angle of velocity as his pace slackened, and now, as he regarded the little circle with a pleasant smile and a benignant glance from his mild blue eyes, he was as fine a picture of a gentleman and a scholar as one might ever see.

At his courteous "Good morning, ladies; good morning, gentlemen," the ladies rose to their feet, and the men stood with their hats held deferentially to the side of their heads. It was Miss Lydia who dared to respond with more than a simple "Good morning."

"Are you going to take the train, doctor?" most sweetly; "you seem to be in a hurry."

Like most retiring scholars of a kindly nature, the doctor was very susceptible to the attractions of a young and pretty woman; and if she added a touch of audacity to her other charms, it made her all the more irresistible. He smiled appreciatively as he turned to her:

"No, Miss Lydia; but Mrs. Charlton has sent me to meet a young and, no doubt, charming lady. Don't

you think it is proper to assume an air of eagerness and haste on such an errand?''

''Perfectly proper, doctor; and you have succeeded admirably—don't you think so, Lieutenant Watson?'' with a little propitiatory smile to the offended officer, who still stood in an attitude of grim unbending.

The lieutenant replied only by a stately bow, and the train drawing in to the station opposite, the doctor turned to Rex McAllister and said gravely:

''I have postponed my recitation for fifteen minutes, Mr. McAllister. Your furlough will be extended for that time; at the end of which Mr. Paley will expect you to be in Evidence.''

McAllister was too confused to see the little twinkle in the tail of the doctor's eye, and he had a Southerner's slowness in perceiving anything in the nature of a pun. But Miss Lydia laughed a quick response, and the doctor, who dearly loved to have his small jokes appreciated, beamed on her graciously as he added:

''Ah, Mr. McAllister, you will have to beware of the sirens. I would recommend you, if you are walking down Main Street near ten oclock, to *αἶψα ἰαίνε κηρός ἐπ' οἴατα δ' ἄλειψε.*'' With which learned quotation, that McAllister appreciated and Miss Lydia did not, the doctor made a sweeping bow to the ladies and crossed over to the train.

''I think I know who the young lady is,'' said McAllister; ''I heard Miss Lucy say the other day that they were to have a new teacher for St. John's school.''

''Oh, of course,'' said Miss Mazie; ''I know all

about her. She is from Massachusetts—a real Yankee school-ma'am. I wonder if she will be young and pretty, as the doctor said? Somehow I can't fancy a Yankee school-ma'am anything but an ancient maiden lady with spectacles and a false front."

"You will have an opportunity of judging for yourself, Miss Mazie," said Rex; "that must be the young lady that the doctor is helping off the car."

"Why, she *is* young!" said Miss Lydia; "and pretty, too—at least from this distance."

"Would n't you call her a little—ah—prim?" ventured the lieutenant, hesitatingly. The others laughed, for the adjective did seem rather appropriate to the slim figure in gray, with long, light-brown curls falling straight beneath a close little quakerish bonnet, which was about as much as they could see of her.

"What will you give me if I walk up to the college with her?" said Rex McAllister, looking sharply at the little figure, and deciding at once that she was pretty enough to make an effort at acquaintance worth while.

"Mr. McAllister!" exclaimed all the girls together; while Miss Lydia added, "You don't dare! One glance of lightning from the doctor's blue eyes would annihilate you."

"Oh, of course, if I did it impertinently. But I shall wait until they are half-way up the block, and then, as I pass them on my way to college, I shall stop and ask the doctor, most deferentially, if I cannot relieve him of that heavy bag he is carrying. Of

course he will introduce me, and we will all three walk up together, as cozy as old acquaintances."

"Well, *you* could do it, if any one could," returned Miss Lydia; "but I hope the doctor will see through your little game, and give you an awful settler. And if he does, I would give a fippenny bit to be there and see."

"Thank you, Miss Lydia, you are always kind! Here they come! She *is* pretty, is n't she?"

Unconsciously they all fell into a silent survey of the little figure passing them with downcast eyes, betraying by her constrained walk and fluctuating color her consciousness of their scrutiny. The doctor was talking in his pleasant fashion, trying to put her at her ease, and only noticed the little party on the steps by including them absent-mindedly in a sweeping wave of his hat. When they were well out of earshot, McAllister broke out:

"Ye gods! what a complexion! roses and milk!"

"Not at all," said Miss Lydia, tartly; "she has a very good skin, but it does not compare with Miss Lucy Charlton's. *That 's* genuine roses and milk."

"And she has such a prim, school-ma'amish air," added Miss Marcia; "I should have known she was from New England from her walk and the cut of her frock."

"Did you notice her hair, girls?" said Miss Mazie, contributing her quota to the round robin of criticism from the vestibule step. "It 's drab; matches her funny little bonnet exactly."

"I am not sure but that she would look very well,"

said Miss Sallie, judicially, "if she were only stylishly dressed. A broad hat now, with a deep fall of lace around it, instead of that queer old-fashioned bonnet, and a black silk mantilla with heavy fringe in place of that little gray cape, would give her quite a different air."

Out of regard to the men present, none of them quite dared to say that it was the skirt falling in straight, scanty folds to the feet, without the sign of a hoop, that gave her a hopelessly outlandish look in the eyes of these country belles. But they could not refrain from preening their own flowing robes over their well-caned petticoats with a conscious air that clearly indicated to the masculine intellects present where the trouble lay. Rex made a low obeisance:

"I bow to the superior judgment of the ladies. She is a fright, doubtless. It was preposterous in me to form an opinion on her complexion or any other of her charms before I had heard your decisions. But now, if you will permit me, I will obey the doctor's behest and hie me collegeward. Miss Lydia, I beg you will watch me well, and see how boldly I dare tackle this female griffin. Ladies, good morning and *au revoir!*"

The doctor and his convoy were now more than halfway up the block, and it took some tall striding on the part of McAllister's long legs to overtake them before they should reach the "Iron Gate" corner. It was under the Washington elm, with its hollow, rapidly decaying trunk, and its wide-spreading branches overshadowing the low log-cabin, whose en-

trance, sunk a foot below the pavement level, was a guarantee of its antiquity and a sure proof to us young people that it had once been, as tradition said, Washington's headquarters in the Indian wars before the Revolution—it was on that sacred spot that Rex overtook them and put into execution his shameless little plot.

On the steps of the Burton mansion the girls were craning their necks to witness his expected discomfiture. To their utter amazement, they saw Dr. Charlton stop as McAllister addressed him, put the bag into his hand, apparently utter a few hasty words of introduction, then turn and come flying down the street again, while Rex, without turning his head, gently fluttered his cambric handkerchief over his left shoulder as a signal to the watchers on the steps of his triumph, and bent his head to the little lady on his right with that air of mingled gallantry and deference he knew so well how to assume.

CHAPTER II

EUNICE HARLOWE

EUNICE HARLOWE had left her home in a factory village of Massachusetts the day before. Her father, a country minister with a small salary and a large family, had committed an unnecessary extravagance, her thrifty mother thought, when he accompanied Eunice to New York and saw her safely across the ferry and on board a night train for Henrysburg.

To Eunice and her father this home-leaving was a great event. She had been carefully educated in Mount Holyoke Seminary with the idea that she was to teach, thereby not only paying her own way, but helping in the education of her three younger sisters. But it had not entered into the father's calculations or her own that she should go so far from home. The advertisement in a church paper for a teacher of the children of the professors of Tomlinson, and a home offered with the family of the president of the college, had read very enticingly, except that Bellaire seemed very far south, and southern Pennsylvania almost a land of barbarians, to their New England prejudices. But they decided finally to answer the advertisement,

and they hardly knew whether to be pleased or sorry when by return mail their application was accepted.

Pullman sleepers were almost or entirely unknown then, and even had there been one on the Henrysburg train, Eunice would never have thought of spending two or three dollars merely to make herself more comfortable for a few hours. She sat bolt upright in the low-backed seat, with her bag and handbox beside her; and at intervals rested her tired head on the side of the car and gained a few moments of unconsciousness, until the strained muscles of her neck aroused her to the painful conviction that there was not much rest to be had from such sleep.

It was in the gray dawn of the September morning that the train drew into the station of the "Pennsylvania Central" road at Henrysburg, and gathering up her hand-baggage, she stepped from the car into a bedlam of shrieking locomotives, shouting men, and moving trains, very bewildering to her quiet country experience. She stood a moment trying to decide what to do, and a kindly official, noticing her dazed look, asked her where she wanted to go, and directed her across a wide space of interlacing tracks to the Northern Central station, from which the Northumberland Valley train started; and promised also to see that her baggage was safely transferred.

It would be long before the Bellaire train started, but she was not sorry. There were the ravages of the night to be repaired, for she was nervously anxious to make as good an impression as possible on her arrival, and she was shocked at the pale and grimy face that

looked back at her from the little glass in the stuffy toilet-room. She did the best she could in the way of ablutions, and then taking a curling-stick from her bag, carefully brushed over it each long, light curl, and put back the neat little bonnet, from which she had scrupulously removed every atom of dust. By that time it was broad daylight, and she was glad to escape from the close and crowded waiting-room into the sweet, morning air. She found a seat in a little park on the banks of the beautiful river, and watched the rocky banks opposite, along which trains were constantly thundering, diving out of sight behind wooded cliffs, and reappearing before she could possibly expect them. Just below, two long bridges crossed the river: one a covered wagon-bridge, reminding her vividly of the old Connecticut River bridge at Hadley, which she had often crossed going to and from Mount Holyoke in her father's carryall, and the other the new railroad bridge, across which was creeping one of the very trains she had been watching play hide and seek on the opposite bank.

She was only idly watching it all, for she was very tired and her thoughts were taken up with the dear home circle she had left and the new home she was approaching. In spite of the sorrow of going so far away, leaving the mother she loved, the father she idolized, and the dear sisters, she had permitted herself some rosy visions of the future. She was only nineteen, and her life in the factory village had shut her out almost entirely from young society and absolutely from association with young men of her own

class. The fact that she was going now to live in the family of the president of a college for young men, where she would certainly meet them often,—perhaps every day, for aught she knew,—was nearly incomprehensible in the light of her previous experience, and sent her pulses bounding a little faster—staid New England pulses though they were.

Now that the journey was nearly over, her dreams were losing their rosy tint. A sickening dread of her new life and the strangers she must meet was taking possession of her. Would the president prove to be an austere man, and life in his home be cold and formal? She had always had an unconfessed feeling that New England stood for all the culture of the country; would the Bellaire people be vulgar and commonplace and more disagreeable, perhaps, than factory people? Her courage was fast ebbing, and her heart turning longingly homeward, when it occurred to her to consult the tiny watch, her father's parting gift. To her consternation, she found that she would have to hasten to catch the train. Fortunately her bandbox and her bag were beside her,—she would not have to stop to hunt them up,—and her trunk was checked; and so she found a seat in one of the queer little yellow cars of the Northumberland Valley Railroad, breathless, but with two minutes to spare.

As soon as she had recovered her breath, she proceeded to take from her bag a green barêge veil, which she very carefully tied over her bonnet, and a linen raglan, which she wrapped around her, know-

ing there would be no chance again to get rid of the dust and make herself neat before reaching Bellaire, and particularly dreading the heavy volumes of black smoke from the soft coal, which made the engines so much more formidable than the wood-consuming locomotives of her own country. But she did not cover her face with the veil. The day was too stifling, now that the sun was well up and fairly at work; and also, she wanted to take in all the views. She intended to become thoroughly acquainted with this new country she was entering. The narrow, closely built street through which the railroad passed, lined with squalid tenements, from whose roofs and porches fluttered grimy and tattered "washings" (much to Eunice's amazement, for it was not Monday), and on whose narrow sidewalks, and almost on the track itself, swarmed scores of unkempt children, did not please her, though she was interested in what was heretofore an unimagined phase of life. But they soon glided out of the close, unpleasant street upon the long bridge, and a breath of cool, soft river air filled the car, and dispelled every lurking odor of the unsavory city.

They were a long time crossing the river, which was here broad and beautiful, with low, wooded islands resting on its bosom, and vistas of lofty mountains opening on the right and left to let its blue waters through; but once fairly across, they were soon speeding up the valley.

Eunice had made the trip through the rich farmlands of eastern Pennsylvania by night. The coun-

try about her home, while picturesque, was bleak and the land comparatively sterile, and it was a revelation to her to see rolling meadows dotted with stately trees; broad fields black with the richness of the loam or golden with the banners of the ripening corn; comfortable farm-houses overshadowed by palatial barns, whose enormous proportions were yet too small to hold the generous harvests of hay and grain that seemed to be bursting through every window and door; huge droves of well-fed cattle, and the score of lazy farm-horses that every farmer evidently considered necessary to his work; and all this abundance, this land of plenty and ease, hemmed in by two parallel lines of mountains forming a blue barrier seven miles away to the northwest and the southeast.

Her life heretofore had been cold and gray. She had known something of the pinching of poverty, and much of the hard economies, the ceaseless industries and rigid formalism, of life among the bleak hills of New England. She began to feel as if the blue and gold of this beautiful valley were already changing the color of her existence. There was a stirring within her as of the petals of unsuspected blossoms of life unfolding to the sunshine; and then her stern New England conscience took her to task for indulging in such soft dreams. What was to become of her high ideals and lofty ambitions if she yielded to these vague yearnings after a life of sensuous ease?

They were entering Bellaire now, and she took off her raglan and veil, folded them away in her bag,

and sat rigidly erect as if she were already under inspection, but her quiet glance taking in every detail of the strange streets. It was not at all like any of the New England towns she knew best. In her own mind she decided it was rather an ugly village, certainly not to be compared with Northampton, her ideal of the beautiful and picturesque. Nevertheless there was something so gay and bright in the aspect of door-steps crowded with pretty girls dressed in sheer muslins,—a kind of dress worn only occasionally in the cool New England summer, and reserved then for state occasions,—their pretty heads guiltless of hat or bonnet, which seemed a little scandalous to her sense of propriety; and the groups of men talking to them was such a novel sight, that she was inclined to be pleased with her first introduction to her new home.

The train moved very slowly through the street, ringing its bell as it went, and she had time to take it all in before she realized that they had stopped. With a quick beating of her heart, she gathered up her bag and handbox and followed the stream of passengers, wondering who would meet her, or what she should do if no one should come. But as she was stepping from the train a hand reached up to help her, and the pleasantest voice in the world said:

"This is Miss Harlowe, I am sure."

The doctor knew there was no possibility of mistaking that quiet little figure with the calm gray eyes; it could belong to no other than a genuine Puritan maiden.

Eunice, on her part, felt all her fears vanish at the sight of the benignant face with its clear-cut, classic features and mild eyes smiling on her so kindly. She relinquished her bag to him; but when he would have taken her bandbox also, she insisted that it was very light, and that she preferred carrying it herself. She alighted in the middle of the street, with no visible station-house near; and she would have been very much bewildered if she had been alone, for she was in the midst of a dense, surging crowd, more than half of them, it seemed to her, colored people, and a large proportion of these half-grown boys, who surrounded her, vociferating:

"Want yer baggage tuk, miss?" or, respectfully saluting Dr. Charlton, "I 'll take yer trunk cheap, doctor." To all their appeals the doctor merely shook his head, and dexterously guiding Eunice to the edge of the crowd, they found themselves in front of a bowing and smiling yellow man mounting guard over a wheel-barrow, to whom the doctor gave the check.

"Permit me to introduce 'Judge Watts' to you, Miss Harlowe," said the doctor, gravely. "I trust you will find him a very valuable friend while you stay with us."

The delighted "judge" bowed, and scraped and grinned more energetically than before, but Eunice was puzzled. She was not used to negroes, and in fact was much afraid of them, and she could not understand the anomaly of a colored "judge" carrying her baggage on a wheel-barrow, nor could she conceive of a venerable president of a college indulging in

a small joke, so she merely bowed a stiff acknowledgment. Dr. Charlton saw her bewilderment and, as they turned to walk up the street, explained that "Judge" was the janitor of West College, and happening to have the same surname as a distinguished judge of the town, the students had dubbed him with this title, of which he was immensely vain. The doctor was in the midst of his explanation when they passed the Burton steps, and although Eunice's long lashes were sweeping her cheek, she had distinctly seen the group of gaily dressed girls; the handsome young officer with difficulty checking his fiery steed, now that the engine was so near; and particularly was she conscious of the admiring gaze directed full upon her from a pair of bold black eyes belonging to a figure more elegant than any that she had yet known.

There was something confusing about that gaze, even after they had passed, and she found it difficult to keep her attention sufficiently fastened on what Dr. Charlton was saying to make suitable responses to his kind inquiries about her journey, and genial comments about the houses and people they passed.

They were almost at the end of the long block, and the doctor had just called her attention to the Iron Gate and the stone wall surmounted by a black railing inclosing the college grounds, one corner of which was becoming visible, when he suddenly stopped with a sharp exclamation and clapped his hand to his inner pocket. Eunice had had no time

to inquire into the cause of his discomfiture or express her sympathy with it, when there appeared at the doctor's elbow the very subject, not of her thoughts, but of her persistent agitations. With the most deferential air, he bowed low to Dr. Charlton and said:

"Permit me, doctor, to relieve you of that heavy bag; I can drop it at the house for you."

"Ah, Mr. McAllister! Yes, yes, I think you may," said the doctor, beginning absent-mindedly, but with a gradually clearing visage. "In fact, Miss Harlowe, if you will allow me, I will introduce Mr. McAllister, and ask you to permit him to see you to the house. I find I have forgotten an important commission of Mrs. Charlton's."

The down-train to Henrysburg had passed them a few minutes before, and the doctor turned with visible anxiety to see if it was still at the station. Rex murmured his pleasure at the commission, and there was nothing for Eunice to do but signify her assent and release the doctor as quickly as possible, although she was aware of an intolerable color flaming in her usually delicately tinted cheeks.

It was then that the cambric handkerchief fluttered over McAllister's left shoulder.

CHAPTER III

HOME-COMING

MCALLISTER turned to Eunice with the air of expressing the deepest devotion as he said:

"Permit me, Miss Harlowe, to relieve you of your bandbox." He was grateful to her for refusing. He had considered it imperative to ask her, but to the fastidious fellow, who never carried the smallest package on the streets, it was sufficiently heroic to be carrying her heavy bag; he felt he never could have stood the guying of his fellow-students if any of them had happened to meet him carrying both bag and bandbox.

They were at the Iron Gate, and a choice of two ways lay before them. They could turn and walk up the long pavement, partly shaded from the broiling sun by the elms overhanging the campus wall, or they could enter the Iron Gate, and follow a little path running parallel with the pavement under arching trees whose heavy foliage excluded every unwelcome ray of sunshine. Rex recommended the latter, and as the heavy gate swung behind them—a sound destined to become very familiar to her ears—Eunice uttered a little exclamation of delight. They

had left the hot glare of brick and mortar behind them. A soft, fragrant tan-bark walk was beneath their feet, a wide expanse of vivid green turf dotted with cool groves and cut by avenues shaded with stately trees was before them, and the light fell so softly through the high, leafy arches over the little path into which they had turned, she could think only of dim cathedral aisles. It seemed to her as if her lines had fallen in pleasant places, and she was always hereafter to be walking through beautiful dusky groves with soft zephyrs playing about her and a stately cavalier at her side. She found herself listening in a kind of dreamlike reverie to McAllister, who was saying:

"They call this path 'Lovers' Lane,' Miss Harlowe, because it is so secluded, I suppose. Don't you think our Bellaire lovers are rather lucky to have such a perfect spot in which to breathe their vows?"

His words embarrassed her. Who had ever before spoken to her of "lovers' vows"? Yet mingling with her embarrassment was a swift, vague, and tremulous premonition that she might, some day, be listening to them there herself.

Rex McAllister wondered to see the bright color flame up in her cheeks again. He had not found the "Yankee schoolma'am" very brilliant as a conversationalist; but there was something fascinating in watching the play of color in the cheek half-turned from him, and in compelling an occasional timid glance from the large gray eyes. He was a man who enjoyed making an impression, and he felt he was

doing that now; and as for the rest, he had sufficient confidence in his conversational powers to be quite willing to bear the burden of the talk. He was not sure, upon the whole, that he did not prefer a quiet woman, even if she were a little "stiff," to Miss Lydia's loud-voiced ways. He was very well satisfied with his companion, therefore, when he had conducted her through the litle gate that led into the president's private grounds, and along the winding path to the house, and up the high steps to the piazza, where Mrs. Charlton and Lucy, with all the younger children in a timid group behind them, were waiting to receive her. It was a trying ordeal to Eunice, but she was able to veil all timidity and agitation under her calm Northern manner. And Mrs. Charlton, who greeted her warmly with a kind kiss, for which Eunice was so totally unprepared as to be unable to respond to it in time, thought her a typical New Englander, very self-possessed certainly, but almost too cold.

She had no idea how her motherly greeting had touched Eunice's heart. Her own mother seldom kissed her, and Eunice hardly knew how to perform the affectionate ceremony properly. But as Mrs. Charlton presented her to her daughter Lucy, she determined to do her best, and met Lucy's shy but friendly greeting with the voluntary proffer of a kiss —and was immediately sure she had done the wrong thing again, and Lucy had not expected it. While Lucy was presenting her to her brothers and little sister, Mrs. Charlton was saying to Rex:

"But where is Mr. Charlton? How do you happen to be bringing Miss Harlowe to us?"

And when Rex explained that he had met them on the street, and the doctor had said that he had forgotten to execute a commission for Mrs. Charlton, and had asked him to bring Miss Harlowe to the house, she exclaimed:

"My letter! Of course he forgot it! but what a shame he should have gone back for it! I asked him to mail it on the train, because I thought it would be no trouble for him, and it would reach its destination sooner. But it was not of the slightest importance; it is really too bad he should have gone back for it."

And then Eunice heard McAllister saying, "I am sorry for the doctor, but his misfortune was my opportunity; it was a very great pleasure to make Miss Harlowe's acquaintance so agreeably."

She knew, of course, the words meant nothing, but she was so unused to anything of the kind she could not help the stir of her pulses as she heard them. And then Mrs. Charlton shook her head at McAllister with an arch smile, as much as to say:

"Oh, you rogue! I know you. But you must beware; I will have no poaching on my preserves."

It was that ready sympathy of comprehension that made the doctor's wife such a great favorite with all the young people, and particularly were the students of the college her stanch admirers. She had been a Southern beauty when she fell in love with the Northern scholar and married him, and she had kept some

of the pretty imperious ways natural to Southern women. The doctor adored her, and she venerated and idolized him; but it was perhaps due to that pretty imperiousness that he would not for the world have failed to execute her smallest commission, and was as much under love's tyranny as in the days of his courtship.

Just then the doctor himself came through the big gate that led out to the street, and McAllister, catching sight of him, explained that he was due at the doctor's lecture-room and took a hurried leave; and the doctor, coming up past the piazza with his long, rapid stride, waved his hand to Eunice and called up: "I am glad to see you have arrived, Miss Harlowe; I will see you at dinner." And then to his wife: "Your letter is all right, my love"—an old-fashioned way he had of addressing her, even sometimes in semi-public—and, without giving any one a chance to reply to him, passed through a tiny gate placed in the high cedar hedge that separated his private grounds from the campus.

"And now, my dear," said Mrs. Charlton, turning to Eunice, "you must come right in and have some breakfast. Did you tell Alcinda to put it on, Millie?" addressing a little brown-haired girl, who had been gazing in round-eyed admiration at Eunice from the moment of her arrival.

"No, 'm, I forgot; but I will now," and the child flew down the long hall with eager feet to atone for her tardiness.

Eunice tried to tell Mrs. Charlton that she did not

need breakfast, but Mrs. Charlton would not listen to her.

"Oh, I shall only give you a bite: it is too near dinner-time for anything more; but you will feel better for eating a little, and after you have had your breakfast, I want you to lie down until dinner-time, and sleep if possible. I shall wake you up for dinner, for Mr. Charlton would feel so disappointed not to find you at the table, and it will be better for you not to sleep too long; you can go to bed early to-night, you know, and get fully rested."

Eunice had supposed she was not hungry, but when she found herself in the pleasant dining-room opening by glass doors upon a side-porch and lawn, and a black boy of about fifteen bringing in a small pot of steaming coffee in one hand and in the other a tiny platter with a beautiful golden-brown omelet on it, she found also that she was quite ready for both.

And while she was at the table "Judge" brought her trunk, carried it up-stairs and unstrapped it, and so she found it awaiting her when she went back to her room. Eunice, who was swift and deft in all her movements, very quickly had her limited number of dresses hanging in the deep closet, her morning-gown with its pretty fixings laid over the back of a chair, the dust shaken and brushed from her traveling-dress, and herself arrayed in a loose dressing-gown. She looked around the big, high-ceilinged room, with its old mahogany furniture, a vase of scarlet salvia on the light-blue cover of her writing-table, and the cool white-muslin curtains at the windows tied back with blue

ribbons; and as she looked she sighed. It was a sigh of full content—it was all so fresh and dainty and homelike.

Outside the strident droning of locusts gave the impression of simmering heat. Her windows opened to the south, and were both raised, but the green outside shutters were bowed, making a soft, pleasant light in the room, and allowing only cool little zephyrs to wander through their half-turned slats. Looking through them, she saw that her windows were further shaded by a great linden, whose branches sometimes brushed the shutters as they swayed in the breeze and gave her an added sense of coolness as she looked into their green depths. She lay down on the soft white bed, put her head on the fragrant linen pillow-case, and closed her tired eyes with a delicious feeling of languor and a delightful sense of being "in the lap of luxury," which had come to her through the new experience of being waited upon by colored servants. All sordid dish-washing cares and kitchen drudgeries seemed now to her as things of a remote past, and she fell asleep with a little sigh upon her lips for her own dear, hard-working mother, for whom there was no such luxurious emancipation possible.

CHAPTER IV

THE PATRONEE PARTY

MRS. CHARLTON would have been very much surprised had she known that Eunice regarded her simple housekeeping as luxurious, for she rather prided herself upon her economy, since the doctor's modest salary required much management to make it supply the exigencies of a large family and a dignified social position.

Accustomed in her youth to a retinue of house-servants, she had thought it impossible at first to get along with the two good "girls" that were all most Bellaire housekeepers considered necessary to carry on the work of a house. But she had learned rapidly, and had a year or two before consummated an arrangement by which, she prided herself, she had still further reduced her domestic expenses. She had taken into her employ a colored woman with a fourteen-year-old son and a little girl; and in consideration of getting a comfortable home for her family, Alcinda was willing to take smaller wages even than the very modest sum paid for a cook in those days. It was part of the arrangement that her son, in return for his board and clothing, was to be dining-room boy

and to assist in the rougher part of the up-stairs work; and it was not long before Charles Cook, junior, had become the most indispensable member of the household.

He had never been named by any shorter title in the family from the day when he first presented himself in the dining-room with his brown face shining from a liberal application of soap and water, his black wool laboriously brushed into almost the semblance of a part, his black eyes dancing, and showing all his teeth with the pleased sense of importance attached to the immaculate white apron he was wearing, and the shining silver salver he was holding in his hand. The kindly doctor, wishing to show his good-will toward this new member of his family, had asked him his name, and at his prompt response, accompanied with a respectful duck, "Charles Cook, junior, sah," the boys had shouted with delight, and the doctor himself had set the fashion of perpetuating the name by always addressing him by his full title.

Taking the new teacher to board in exchange for the tuition of their children had been another stroke of economy on Mrs. Charlton's part; and although the doctor had at first demurred at adding to their already large family or increasing his wife's cares, she was so childishly pleased with her thrifty project that he had to yield finally. Now she was saying to the doctor, who had just come in from his class-room and was waiting for the dinner-bell in Mrs. Charlton's large sunny room:

"I am so glad we decided to take her. Is n't she charming? I know I shall love her."

"Yes, dear, your little plans always turn out well," with an admiring glance; "she is a perfect type of a young New England gentlewoman, and I am very glad Lucy is to have her for companion as well as teacher."

"I am going up-stairs now to waken her for dinner," said Mrs. Charlton; "and I have a great mind to call her 'Eunice.' Would you, dear?" looking wistfully at her husband, and adding, "She must be so homesick so far from home and among so many strangers."

"My love," said the doctor, earnestly, taking her hand and looking into her shining eyes as she stood beside him, "do exactly as your heart prompts you. It can never prompt you to do anything but what is kindest and best."

When Eunice heard a soft voice calling her name, and thought, too, she felt a light kiss on her forehead, she opened her eyes and lay for a moment quite still and bewildered. Her sleep had been the heavy sleep of exhaustion, and she could not at once collect her scattered faculties. She almost thought she had lost her identity altogether, awakening so suddenly in that strange room to find a sweet face framed in dark glossy curls bending over her, and a pair of beautiful brown eyes looking lovingly into hers.

Gradually, however, the mists cleared away, she

recognized the eyes that were now smiling at her bewilderment, and sprang quickly up, exclaiming:

"Is it morning, and am I late?"

"It is too bad to arouse you," said Mrs. Charlton, "when you were sleeping so sweetly; but it is dinner-time. Don't stop to do anything, but bathe your face a little, put on that pretty gown on the chair that I have been admiring, and come down and see Mr. Charlton. He is very impatient to make your acquaintance further. Would you like to have me help you with your fastenings?"

"Oh, no," answered Eunice, quickly. She had already risen, and Mrs. Charlton was pouring some fresh water into the basin for her.

"You must not do that for me, Mrs. Charlton," said Eunice, greatly disturbed at being waited upon in such fashion, "I do not need any help, and I will be downstairs in five minutes."

"Oh, don't hurry; it does n't matter if you are late. And, my dear, I want to ask you to let me call you Eunice. I think it will make you feel more at home, and I want you to be very much at home with us."

Eunice found it difficult to reply, the motherly tone touched her so deeply; but she managed to stammer out her grateful thanks.

The pretty morning-gown she had laid ready upon her chair was one that she and her mother had taken great pride in making. It was of soft gray cashmere faced with quilted blue silk and falling open over a fine white cambric "front" tucked from the hem to

the waist with tiny tucks. But she had never worn it, and she found the getting into it the first time no easy problem; and so she did not keep quite to her five minutes. It was fully a quarter of an hour later, therefore, when Millie, who had been sent to conduct her down-stairs, opened the dining-room door and ushered in proudly the new teacher. The doctor was in the very midst of "asking the blessing," and Eunice had to stop at the door until he had finished and stood with dropped lids, while four pairs of curious eyes took sly peeps at her from between fingers that were supposed to be reverently covering them. Simultaneously with the four boyish "Amens," pronounced loudly and promptly, the four heads were lifted, and Eunice had to run the gauntlet of their undisguised admiration as she passed to her seat beside the doctor at the farther end of the table. She was too conscious of her new finery not to find it a trying ordeal, and the color was coming and going in her cheeks as she took her place.

The doctor had taken in at a glance the pretty gown, its mingled blue and gray matching the tints of the large, calm eyes, and it quite satisfied his esthetic sense. So did the face, although its oval was almost too long for a perfect line of beauty, and looked still longer with the light curls drooping on both sides of it. But the chin was well molded, and there were lines of firmness about the mouth that he liked as betokening the strength of character suitable to her vocation. The brow was white and open, a little inclined perhaps to be high and narrow, but

that was no fault in those days. On the whole, he was very much pleased with the personnel of the new teacher. He thought her a quaint New England type, and he was scientifically fond of finding new types. He decided there must be Quaker blood in her ancestry, and he could easily imagine himself addressing her as "Friend Eunice," with the pretty "thee" and "thou." Of course this mental inventory took but a moment of time, and Eunice had only begun to unfold her napkin when the doctor was saying to her, gallantly:

"You have won the boys' hearts already, Miss Harlowe. A pretty woman in pretty clothes completely subjugates them."

The boys, according to their different temperaments, smiled a gallant response to their father's speech, or looked foolish; and Mrs. Charlton, glancing saucily at her husband, said:

"He is speaking for himself, Miss Harlowe. You will not be long in finding out that the boys come by their weakness honestly."

And then the good doctor rubbed his hands delightedly at being found out, and was just about to make another gallant rejoinder when he discovered that Eunice did not quite know how to take these pleasantries and was becoming embarrassed for a reply. His manner changed instantly, and he was the grave but kindly host, leading the table-talk that followed into topics of general interest. Eunice was included in it all just enough to make her feel not so much the honored guest as the welcome member of

the home circle, and she was soon quite at her ease, and taking a modest share in the conversation, with great good sense and ready appreciation, the doctor thought.

"And now, Eunice, we must tell you about the patronee party," said Mrs. Charlton when Charles Cook, junior, staggering under the weight of an enormous watermelon, had placed it before the doctor, who skilfully dissected a bit of the luscious heart and laid it before Eunice. Lucy looked up in surprise to hear her mother use such a familiar address to the dignified stranger.

"I don't believe, mamma," she said, "that Miss Harlowe ever heard of a patronee party;" and Lucy's surmise proving correct, Mrs. Charlton proceeded to explain it in full.

I do not know whether "patronee parties" were peculiar to Old Tomlinson, but they were time-honored institutions there, and much looked forward to by the belles and beaux. It was a requirement of the college that each student, at his entrance, should select one of the faculty as his "patron"; with him were deposited the student's funds, and he regulated his expenditures. And back somewhere in the eighteenth century, I suspect, had arisen the custom of the patron giving a party to his patronees, to which an equal number of young ladies was invited. I have sometimes fancied that there was a friendly rivalry among the professors as to who should give the finest party to his patronees, and that new students, on entering college, were advised by old ones as to which

professor made the best patron in that respect; and the bachelor professors, necessarily disqualified from entertaining, had a rather small *clientèle*.

I hardly think Mrs. Charlton gave Eunice quite so full an explanation as this, but it was sufficient to make her understand the name at least, and then she added:

"We have always given our patronee party in winter, but it is a much more troublesome affair then, with hot oysters and salads, and I have decided to try it this year early in the season. It will be full moon to-morrow night, and we can use the veranda and garden; and it is so warm that ices and simple refreshments will be very acceptable. But our principal reason in having it so early is to introduce you at once to the young people. You see, I am thriftily trying to kill two birds with one stone, giving you a début party and getting through with the patronee party at the same time."

There was something formidable to Eunice in the sound of the word "party." She could not remember that she had ever been to a real young ladies' party with young gentlemen in attendance, and it was with very mingled emotions that she heard of the approaching festivity. She was not quite sure that she would know what to do, and she wondered vaguely if they would play games, as she remembered that the factory girls and boys did at the church sociables—and grew so loud and noisy that Eunice shuddered at the remembrance. Or perhaps they danced! And mingled with her very severe ideas of the wickedness of

such an ungodly pastime was a latent sense of the dreariness she would experience in being a wall-flower.

But it was not all trepidation. "A party" sounded very nice, too; and she was sure to meet Mr. McAllister, and she found that pleasant to look forward to. And then she had her graduating-dress all ready, and she was quite sure nothing could be nicer or more appropriate for a party than that. She and Lucy had a chance to get very well acquainted in the long, hot afternoon that followed, which they spent, for the sake of comfort, in the cool parlors; and she was greatly relieved when to her timid inquiry if there would be dancing, Lucy replied in quite a shocked tone: "Oh, no! of course not; you know father is a clergyman"; and then added reflectively: "I am not sure that he disapproves of dancing very much—or mother, either. We dance sometimes in the evening by ourselves; but I suppose people would not like it if they thought father countenanced it, and of course it would not do to have dancing at a party in our house."

Eunice was so much relieved to find that she was not to be compelled to pass through that trial that she was half tempted to confide in Lucy the fact that she did not know what they did at parties, or how they did it; but she remembered that Lucy was to be her pupil, and that there must be a certain amount of dignity maintained in their relations, and she decided she must simply watch others and do as they did.

There could hardly be a greater contrast than Lucy and Eunice presented when they were both dressed

the next evening and awaiting in the parlor the arrival of the first guests. They stood on either side of Mrs. Charlton, who, beautiful at all times, was quite queenly when arrayed for a state occasion in sweeping robes of silk, her dress opened at the neck to show a kerchief of finest lace, and the flowing sleeves displaying undersleeves of the same costly fabric. Her dark, glossy hair, falling in curls about her face, was gathered into a high knot at the back with a broad shell-comb, and her eyes were as bright and her cheeks as rosy as any girl's in the room. She was a splendid foil to the two girls, both fair, but of such different types. Eunice, with her Quaker-like beauty, looked just as she ought in her simple muslin dress tucked in wide tucks from the hem to the waist, and with a blue sash confining the folds of the "baby" waist, her eyes a little brighter than usual, the tint on her cheeks a little deeper, and her hair, if possible, smoother, with a little wreath of white rosebuds resting on it. On the other side of her mother stood Lucy, a very rose herself. Her hair was curled, too, in golden fluffy curls, waving about her face like a bright halo. Her eyes were like the deepest blue of her own soft skies, and the pink rose fastened in her hair was not more exquisitely tinted than her cheek. Her round white arms were bare, and so was her neck, gleaming in snowy whiteness from among clouds of soft tulle, which were fastened at her waist with a pink satin girdle where they met the fleecy ruffles of her skirt.

Eunice had always a confused remembrance of that evening: a party where they neither danced nor

played games; where the amusement was conversation with a little very good music, yet where there was not a particle of "stiffness"; where the stream of talk flowed lightly, swiftly, and sometimes sparklingly; and where long lines of young men and young women were brought up and presented to her,—the young men not all handsome, but all having something bright to say in the minute or two they were permitted to linger at her side; and the young women, most of them to her eye extremely pretty, and all of them to her quick feminine perception thoroughly well dressed and perfectly at home with this kind of thing, and very cordial and sweet in their manner toward her.

But if most of the evening was a dazzling blur on her memory, the latter part of it always stood out with startling vividness. She had begun to be very weary with long standing, and from the continued strain of keeping up with so much bright nonsense, when McAllister appeared at her side. She had seen him earlier in the evening, but only for a moment, when he had inquired with great *empressement* whether she had recovered from the fatigues of her journey, and she had felt the foolish color leap up into her face at his tones. Now when he appeared again he said, with quite an air of concern:

"You look tired, Miss Harlowe; let me insist upon your coming out upon the veranda and getting a little air and a little rest."

Mrs. Charlton turned to her quickly. "Yes, go with Mr. McAllister, Eunice; there is no necessity of

your staying here any longer. If everybody has not arrived, they deserve not to meet you for coming so late. I am going to dismiss Lucy, too, in a few minutes."

So she took McAllister's offered arm, and he skilfully piloted her through the throng and out the low French window on to the veranda. The veranda continued around the other side of the house, and there at the farther end sofas and low chairs and an ottoman or two had been arranged to make a pretty boudoir. The full moon was flooding the garden, but that part of the veranda was shaded by a great maple. The seats seemed to Eunice to be all occupied, but at their approach a young lady rose from a low easy-chair in which she had been half reclining, and a young man sprang up from an ottoman at her feet.

"We have been saving this chair for you, Miss Harlowe," said the young lady in a pleasant voice; "we were sure you must be tired." And the young man said, "Here 's your seat, Mac; Miss Mazie and I are going for a walk."

They lingered a moment to interchange a few pleasant words, and then as they walked away McAllister said:

"That young fellow is Willie Dayton, and if I tell you a secret you must not betray him. He is dead in love with Miss Lucy, over head and ears, and I don't believe she cares a picayune for him."

He had the air of being very confidential as he spoke, and assuming that they were very old friends, and Eunice could not help feeling that they were. He went on:

"The young lady with him is the younger Miss Burton; she does not belong to the college set, and is invited only on formal occasions like this. She and her sister and Miss McNair and Miss Morris are all here to-night from the army set, with Lieutenant Watson. They are great admirers of Dr. and Mrs. Charlton, though they are not at all intimate at the house. Perhaps you remember meeting Miss Morris, a very handsome brunette, and Miss McNair, a rather dashing girl, not exactly pretty, but with more men at her feet than any girl in town."

"Yes, I remember them all," said Eunice, quietly; "I saw them the day I arrived, sitting on the steps of a house we passed."

"The deuce you did!" said Rex, betrayed into the expression by his surprise that the quiet and apparently unobservant little creature had not only taken them all in, but remembered them perfectly. But he regretted his expletive as soon as it was uttered; for he saw by Eunice's shocked face that it had all the effect of an oath on her ears.

"I beg your pardon," he said quickly, "for my rude expression. But will you please tell me, Miss Harlowe, how you managed to see so much with your eyes closed? For I can take my oath you never lifted them once when you passed."

Eunice smiled, but did not vouchsafe an explanation, and he continued:

"Then I suppose you saw my humble self also, or do you keep your eyes only for the ladies?"

"I saw you distinctly, and recognized you at once when you overtook us on our way to the college," said

Eunice, looking at him with her quiet gray eyes, in which he could see by the moonlight there was a little twinkle of amusement.

"Ah, thank you—Miss Eunice," he murmured softly; "may I not call you so? I heard Mrs. Charlton call you Eunice, and I thought it the most charming name I had ever heard, and so perfectly suited to you that I determined on the spot to ask you to allow me to call you Miss Eunice."

Eunice could not stand the steadfast gaze of the bright black eyes, softened to a look of tenderness, either real or assumed. He was sitting on an ottoman at her feet, and it was harder to avoid them than if he had been looking down upon her. She turned to look away, and with as much indifference as she could master answered:

"I presume it is the custom here. I noticed everyone called Miss Charlton, Miss Lucy; and Mr. Dayton call Miss Burton, Miss Mazie. I am quite willing to be a Roman in Rome."

"The cold-hearted little Yankee, with her dreadful 'presumes,'" thought Rex. "She is making game of me, but I reckon two can play at that." And forthwith he proceeded in his most dexterous fashion to utter the soft and airy nothings he had found so effective in many a flirtation with the girls of South Carolina and Bellaire. Eunice parried them very well, but he had begun to congratulate himself upon the impression he was making, when two people who had been promenading the length of the veranda now approached them, and the lady said:

"Mr. McAllister, I think you have been monopolizing Miss Harlowe quite long enough. Here is Lieutenant Watson dying to make her acquaintance, and I know Miss Harlowe must be anxious to get rid of you. Miss Harlowe, if you will permit me, I will relieve you of Mr. McAllister, and take him to Mrs. Charlton, who will doubtless find some service for him."

Rex rose with the slow, languid grace peculiar to him.

"Really, Miss Lydia," he said, "you are too kind; but if I must be torn from one fair charmer, I can only rejoice that it is 't' other dear charmer' that does it. Miss Harlowe, I hope I have not been boring you; but I give you fair warning that if you are any kinder to Lieutenant Watson than you have been to me, I shall find it out and call him to account."

When he had taken Miss Lydia off, who was still protesting she was going to carry him to Mrs. Charlton, a rather awkward silence fell on the lieutenant and Eunice. He was a good-looking young fellow, quite as tall as Rex McAllister and broader, with not so much padding at the shoulders nor quite so much compression at the waist, though the unwritten law of the service required a certain amount of it, to which every good officer conformed.

Eunice had never in her life met an officer, and the dazzling gold and blue of his full-dress uniform frightened her. His fierce cavalry mustache, his military erectness and close-cropped hair, were formidable also; but he had honest brown eyes which invited

trust, and she summoned up courage to ask him to sit down. It was a somewhat difficult feat to accomplish, his sword entangling itself awkwardly with his feet as he took the low seat, and he did not look as graceful as Rex McAllister had in that lowly attitude.

Altogether he was so little at his ease that Eunice took courage from his diffidence and began the conversation by some slightly stilted remarks about the beauty of the moon-lighted garden with groups of gaily laughing and talking people flitting through it. The lieutenant responded to her efforts, and, once fairly launched, talked well. He had nothing of the soft sentimentalist in his manner, but he had many questions to ask her about her New England home; for New England was a mysterious land to him, and he was intensely curious about it. It had been his desire to find out what kind of creature a New England young lady might be that had made him express a wish to meet her, though nothing could have been further from his desires than to have Miss Lydia take him at his word so promptly. Eunice was glad to tell him about the home customs, and give him her impressions of these that seemed to her to belong to people of another clime and a foreign nation. She quite warmed with her subject, and talked much better than she had talked with McAllister, but she was not at all excited. Her eyes had lost much of their brightness, and little tongues of flame no longer darted at inconvenient moments into her cheeks. They were getting on very well, indeed, when a gay party with Willie Dayton and Lucy among them, followed by Charles Cook,

junior, and another colored boy bearing trays of ices and cakes, broke in upon them.

"We thought we should find you here," said Willie, "and we have come to eat our supper with you."

He drew up a little table as he spoke, on which he placed the cream and cake, and then drew up a sofa beside it for Lucy. They were having a very cozy little supper when they were joined by McAllister and Miss Lydia.

"Room for any more?" they asked, as they came up.

"Plenty of room," said Willie, rising from his place beside Lucy on the sofa. "Take my seat, Miss Lydia."

"Not for worlds," said Lydia, laughingly. "I should certainly feel *de trop* then. I like this seat better," and she dropped into a low chair and motioned Rex to a seat on an ottoman beside her. But Rex, apparently, did not see her gesture. Instead, he stopped behind Eunice and leaned over the back of her chair while he half whispered:

"You are unkind to me; here you have been talking to the lieutenant for a good quarter of an hour, and you hardly allowed me ten minutes."

Eunice was embarrassed at his confidential whispering, which yet the lieutenant might easily have overheard; greatly embarrassed that he should bend over her chair with an air of devotion as new to her as it was difficult for her to deal with; and above all was she annoyed and irritated with him that he should cause her such embarrassment. Nothing could have

been primmer than her reply to him, unless it was her manner of making it; and her words were intentionally clear-cut for the lieutenant's ear as well:

"I presume, Mr. McAllister, you have found the fifteen minutes quite as pleasant as I have found them." If she had supposed she was administering a rebuke to Rex, as one might have been led to infer from the severity of her manner, she was mistaken. Rex chuckled inwardly. "Jealous," he said to himself, "and playing off the lieutenant against me! Verily, the little Quakeress is progressing."

At her words the lieutenant, who, since Miss Lydia's advent, had been only waiting his chance, sprang up.

"Take my seat, Mr. McAllister," he said, and without waiting to see whether it was accepted or declined, he slipped into the one to which Miss Lydia had motioned Rex.

"Adorable!" murmured Rex, sinking into the seat the lieutenant had vacated with a rapturous sigh; "I shall always hereafter believe that fiery man of war to be also a man of the utmost discernment. Ah, Miss Harlowe," fixing his bold black eyes on her and disregarding her blushes, painfully apparent in the flooding moonlight, " 'On such a night as this—' "

How far he might have progressed with *Jessica's* soft speech is uncertain. Miss Lydia's penetrating tones interrupted him.

"Mr. McAllister, am I to go hungry while you whisper airy nothings?" she said icily.

It was unpardonably rude of Miss Lydia; and to

be rude to a girl and a stranger was the way to rouse all that was best in Rex to defend the defenseless, and all that was worst in him to resent the rudeness.

"I cannot imagine so ethereal a creature ever suffering such earthly pangs," he answered, coolly and intentionally insolent. "Lieutenant, will you be so good as to see that Miss McNair has an ice? A homeopathic prescription."

But the lieutenant had sprung to his feet at Miss Lydia's first words, and, with a swift apology for his neglect, was hurrying away, and so did not hear McAllister's speech, which he, in turn, might have resented. Strange to say Miss Lydia did not resent it at all. It seemed, instead, to bring her to a sense of her rudeness to Eunice, and she apologized very prettily to her; and Lucy and Willie, throwing themselves into the breach with an animated controversy as to the respective merits of the army or the law as a profession, which they had been discussing between themselves, and in which they now, with rather too evident a purpose, perhaps, included the others, all was quite amicable by the time the lieutenant had returned with his ices and cakes. The little incident had apparently created only an access of gaiety, and they lingered long over their ices, Miss Lydia's high-pitched voice and ringing laugh more and more in evidence as the evening wore on and as Rex's attentions to Eunice grew more and more pronounced.

Up-stairs—the guests all gone, the house below darkened—Lucy came into Eunice's room to "talk it

over'' in her dressing-gown while she brushed out her curls; and they found so much to tell each other of all that had happened that they parted finally to lay their tired heads upon their pillows with the feeling of old friends and confidantes.

Lucy dropped asleep at once, but the experience had been too new and exciting for Eunice; she found herself going over in her mind words and tones and looks that she was quite sure meant nothing at all, and that she was quite indignant with herself for remembering. None the less, her last waking thoughts were of dark eyes and admiring glances and softly murmured words.

CHAPTER V

THE HANDSOMEST MAN IN THE ARMY

EUNICE began to fear life in Bellaire was to prove a round of dissipation when, the next morning at breakfast, Mrs. Charlton announced that Mrs. Barton, wife of the commandant at the barracks, had invited them out to "retreat," with tea on the lawn to follow.

"Oh, lovely!" exclaimed Lucy. "I 'm so glad you 're to be introduced to the barracks so soon, Eunice. That 's one of the nicest things we do in Bellaire—walk out to the barracks to 'retreat,' or sometimes in the morning to 'guard mount.' But we don't often have tea on the lawn afterward. It 's very grand, you know, to be invited to the commandant's house; especially if you don't happen to belong to the army set."

Then a sudden fear as to the walk presented itself to her, and she added quickly:

"Is it only we that are invited, mother? Will there be no other young people?"

"Oh, I think so. I fancy it 's to be quite a party," Mrs. Charlton assured her. "Mrs. Barton says it is

a special invitation to meet the 'handsomest man in the army.' "

"Whom does she mean, mother—not Lieutenant Watson?" Lucy's tones were slightly scornful.

"I 'm not sure," answered Mrs. Charlton, slowly; "but I think I know"; and then refused to hazard a guess. "No, we 'll wait and see," she said; and had hardly finished speaking when "Judge" appeared at the door, the bearer of a tiny white note for Lucy.

"It 's from Cousin Willie," said Lucy, looking up at Eunice as she finished reading it. "He asks permission for Rex and himself to walk out with us to the barracks this afternoon. Shall I say yes for you?"

"I presume so," said Eunice, trying to look as indifferent as Lucy over such a momentous affair as an invitation from a young man, and hoping that no one would notice the little tongues of flame she could feel darting in and out of her cheeks.

There were only eight in the little party setting out from Mrs. Charlton's door as the late afternoon shadows were lengthening over the velvety turf of the campus. Of the eight, only Lucy and Eunice and Rex and Willie were of the college set; Marcia Morris, the beauty, and Lydia McNair, the belle, were the other girls, and by their sides stalked two stalwart officers from the barracks.

They were a pleasant sight, those Bellaire belles and beaux of long ago, as they walked down the shaded streets of the old town; and the neighbors, sitting on the stoops in the cool of the afternoon and

watching them as they passed, had only kindly comments for them. The stately Marcia, tall, dark, and graceful, led the way, and by her side an officer, walking awkwardly as became a cavalry officer, his spurs jingling and his sword clanking superciliously. By Miss Lydia's side walked Lieutenant Watson, a glow of pleasure on his fine face, and holding himself a little more proudly erect as he walked beside the acknowledged leader of Bellaire society. Willie was with Lucy, of course—dainty little Lucy, her golden curls afloat on the breeze, and tripping by Willie's side with the light and airy grace of a fairy; and Rex brought up the rear, holding with studied grace a plain and somber parasol over Eunice.

It was something of a trial to Rex that every other man was holding, more or less clumsily, a tiny sunshade ruffled gaily, and that Lucy and Lydia and Marcia were all a fluff of summer muslins and laces over swaying crinoline, while Eunice's pearl-gray chally fell in straight, soft folds to her feet. Yet there must have been an atom of moral courage in his character; for as he saw wondering or critical glances directed toward Eunice as they passed in review down the long line of Bellaire burghers at ease on their own door-steps, he said to himself slowly, noting Eunice's gray eyes dancing with excitement under their long lashes and the color coming and going in the oval of her cheeks, and her lithe and graceful figure swaying with each elastic step, "She 's as pretty as any of them, and a thousand times more classic in her style of dress."

Dr. and Mrs. Charlton had gone on in advance of the young folks in the family carryall, and it proved to be, as Mrs. Charlton had conjectured, quite a party. Most of the guests were already gathered on the veranda and the lawn before the commandant's house, and Eunice found she had another dreadful ordeal to undergo in the introductions. But Dr. and Mrs. Charlton were there to keep her in countenance, and Mrs. Barton was cordial and sweet, and her own calm exterior helped her to go bravely through with it. It was the army set that was present in force, Dr. Charlton's little household were the only outsiders, and Eunice had already formed rigid ideas of the worldliness, or perhaps worse, of the army set; but they melted rapidly away under the thawing influence of the gracious cordiality that met her on all sides. They were a manless company at first, for the two officers had hastily excused themselves to take their places in the coming ceremony, and Rex and Willie were the only men left among the bevy of girls.

"Who *is* your lion, Mrs. Barton?" asked Lydia McNair. "We 've all been trying to guess. Mrs. Charlton says there 's only one man who answers to the description of 'the handsomest man in the army,' but she won't tell us who it is."

"Wait till you see him" Mrs. Barton answered. "Or perhaps you know him. There he comes across the parade-ground with Major Barton."

Everyone turned quickly. Riding across the open square beside Major Barton was an erect, soldierly figure towering by half a head above the group of

subalterns surrounding him. It was impossible to distinguish more of him than that the close-cut beard and thick wavy hair were already turning white; but Rex exclaimed quickly:

"Why, it 's Uncle Robert! There 's no mistaking 'Traveller' even at this distance. Did you ever see a more magnificent horse, Miss Harlowe?"

Miss Lydia gave Eunice no chance to reply, for which she was grateful—since she knew so little of horses that she had no intelligent answer ready.

"Of course!" Lydia exclaimed; "that description could apply to no one else." And then a sudden silence fell upon the little party.

The garrison band had been playing at intervals, and at intervals also the mounted buglers had been sounding their musical summons. In response to the summons the whole garrison was now drawn up in picturesque order surrounding the tall flag-staff on the parade in front of the commandant's house. The shadows had been lengthening rapidly across the deep emerald of the close-cut lawns,—the garrison's pride, for the turf was a hundred years old,—and now the lower rim of the sun was just touching the horizon. Once more the mounted buglers sounded the beautiful "retreat," the sunset gun boomed forth its signal, and the orderly standing at the foot of the tall staff began to lower the flag. As it fluttered slowly down every soldier and every officer stood facing it at salute, while the famous band broke into the strains of the "Star Spangled Banner."

It was Lydia McNair who first broke the silence.

The soldiers in squadrons were wheeling and marching toward their quarters, and the officers were dismounting and giving their horses into the charge of orderlies preparatory to joining the ladies on Mrs. Barton's veranda. Miss Lydia sighed.

"No wonder our soldiers love their flag so," she said, "when they see it so honored every day."

"I could die for it!" exclaimed Lucy, ardently, her eyes beaming and her cheeks glowing with the enthusiasm with which the scene had inspired her.

"And so could I!" exclaimed Willie and Rex in concert.

It was an old story to all those on the veranda, except to Eunice. It was a favorite pastime with the young people of Bellaire to form walking-parties to the barracks for "retreat," but the beautiful ceremony never palled and never failed to fill them with love and loyalty. To Eunice it was new and wonderful. She had never before known that all over her native land, wherever a company or a regiment of the army was stationed, and on every ship of the navy riding the seas, the sunset hour was always witness to just such honoring of the beautiful flag. A fierce new loyalty began to burn within her. She began to feel that heretofore she had been provincial: she had loved New England, but had cared but little for that whole broad country which for almost the first time she proudly claimed as her own. She glowed with pride to hear Rex ardently second Lucy's speech, and she longed to be able to break through her native reserve and second it also.

In the midst of her glowing thoughts she found herself being presented to a tall soldier who seemed to her to merit a better description than handsome, there was such mingled benignity and nobility in his bearing. The dark-brown eyes beamed on her in kindly fashion, but yet she was sure she caught a glimpse of lightning lurking in their depths, and they inspired her almost as much with awe as with liking. She was aghast when one of Mrs. Barton's little girls rushed across the veranda and flung herself into his arms. But he seemed to like it and not to be embarrassed by the child's noisy demonstration of affection.

"She 's namesake to both me and my wife," he said to Eunice in apology for the child, "and knows she has full liberty with her old godfather. Come, Roberta, tell Miss Harlowe your name."

"Roberta Custis Barton," responded the child, promptly; and in the same breath: "Please, Uncle Robert, have n't you any candy in your pocket?"

"Look and see, Bobolink," he answered, and pretended to be greatly astonished when the child pulled a bag of peppermints out of the skirts of his coat.

"Are you everybody's uncle?" asked Eunice, beginning to feel wonderfully at ease with the stern soldier.

"Not 'really, truly' uncle," he answered, smiling. "I am only uncle by courtesy to Willie Dayton and Rex McAllister because their fathers and I were college chums and Rex's mother was one of my childish sweethearts. Of course, I 'm uncle to all of Mrs. Barton's children; we 've been in barracks together

and in camp together, and we 're all old soldiers together."

"Robert," said Mrs. Barton, coming up at this moment intent on seating her guests at the little tables set on the veranda and the lawn, "I 'm going to put you with Dr. and Mrs. Charlton."

"By all means," answered Uncle Robert; "but let me have some of the young people as well. You know my weakness, Emily; give me Miss Harlowe and Rex, at least."

"It will make jealousy, I fear," said Mrs. Barton, shaking her head doubtfully; "but I know you 're not happy without young people around you. Not to seem invidious, I will have to add one or two others, and I think I will give you Lydia McNair and Lieutenant Watson also. You remember the McNairs when you were stationed in Bellaire years ago?"

"Of course! and I remember Miss Lydia as a saucy little girl in pantalets. Give me her also, by all means."

On their way to the table, the colonel threw his arm affectionately over Rex's shoulders.

"Well, Rex, and how are they all at home?" he asked genially.

Rex colored with pleasure.

"All very well, sir," he answered respectfully. "They will be delighted to hear so directly from you. I shall write my mother all about your visit."

"And tell her I found her boy in good company," he said, with a sly glance at Eunice, which greatly pleased Rex as an evidence of Uncle Robert's admira-

tion of the little New Englander. But it was not the colonel's way to lose an opportunity of uttering the "word in season," and so he added in a graver tone:

"And how is it with you, my boy? Is everything as it should be? Are you making of yourself a man of whom that dear mother of yours will be proud some day?"

Rex colored violently this time, and hardly with pleasure.

"I hope so, sir," he said, at first stiffly, as one who rejects unwarrantable interference. Then a better impulse followed quickly, and he added impulsively:

"I 'm afraid, Uncle Robert, I 'm hardly up to your standard or my mother's, but perhaps I 'm not quite as bad as I seem."

There was no time for any further words, and the colonel relinquished Rex's shoulder with a friendly pressure. Mrs. Barton had put him on her right and Dr. Charlton on her left, and since the table was a long square and held eight people,—an impossible number to seat symmetrically,—Eunice sat next Mrs. Charlton, who was at the right of her host. It was an arrangement that put Eunice directly opposite Rex; and though Rex was in duty bound to devote himself to Lydia, by whose side he sat, he had a very good chance to watch Eunice, and he was curiously interested to note how she would bear herself at what might almost be called her first dinner-party. He had begun to decide that he had no reason to feel ashamed; she lacked a little the ease of the

other guests, the primness inseparable from her was perhaps a little more noticeable than usual, but her air of breeding was unmistakable and her quiet dignity a pleasant contrast to Miss Lydia's boisterousness, which, however, was less pronounced than her wont, held in bounds by her awe of Dr. Charlton, in whose kind blue eyes she liked to shine and dreaded to read disapproval.

Half-way through the supper, Rex, who had been leaning toward Lydia with his usual air of devotion, lifted his head at the sound of something like a half-gasp from Eunice, and glanced across the table at her. She was leaning slightly forward, her eyes fixed on the colonel, and the look in them was half horror, half unwilling interest. Rex turned to listen to what his Uncle Robert could be saying to account for that intense expression in Eunice's eyes.

"Is it not strange," he was saying, "that the descendants of the Pilgrim Fathers, who crossed the Atlantic to preserve their religious freedom, have always proved the most intolerant of the spiritual liberty of others?"

The good doctor, embarrassed for Eunice, hastened to modify this statement; but the colonel, not understanding at all that Miss Harlowe, who had greatly attracted him, was a New Englander, went on, serenely unconscious of any discourtesy:

"The efforts of certain people at the North to interfere with and change the domestic institutions of the South are unlawful and foreign to their duty. They are neither responsible nor accountable for this

institution, and it can only be changed through the agency of a civil and servile war."

"But I thought I had understood that you did not approve of slavery," interposed the doctor, mildly.

"I do not. There are few, I believe, in this enlightened age who will not acknowledge that slavery as an institution is a moral and political evil in any country; but I think it a greater evil to the white than to the black race. My feelings are strongly enlisted in behalf of the latter; my sympathies are more strongly with the former."

"Then why," objected the doctor, "are you so severe in your disapproval of the abolitionist, who thinks with you that slavery is an evil to both whites and blacks?"

For the first time in the course of the argument the colonel's calm exterior seemed ruffled. Eunice saw the lightning-flash she had suspected of lurking in his brown eyes. He spoke with some asperity:

"The abolitionist, sir, must know that the course he is pursuing will only excite angry feelings in the master and insurrection in the slave. Emancipation will sooner result from the mild and melting influence of Christianity than from the storms and tempests of fiery controversy. This influence, though slow, is sure. While we see the course of the final abolition of human slavery is still onward, and give it the aid of our prayers and all justifiable means in our power, we must leave the progress as well as the result in His hands Who sees the end, Who chooses to work by slow influences, with Whom a thousand

years are but as a single day. But the abolitionist does not approve the mode by which Providence accomplishes its purpose; though the reasons he gives for interference in what he has no concern with, hold good of every kind of interference with our neighbors."

"I am somewhat of your way of thinking," said the doctor, benignly; "though I believe 'God moves in a mysterious way his wonders to perform,' and the abolitionist may be one of them."

The colonel smiled.

"I cannot possibly accuse you of irreverence, sir," he said; "and perhaps you are right—but God forbid!"

Seeing that the colonel was now mollified, the doctor ventured on a question he was greatly desiring to ask.

"What do you think, colonel, will be the effect in the South should Lincoln be elected?"

The colonel's broad brow and kindly eyes clouded at once.

"Ah, my dear sir, I greatly dread the result. You remember that in '56 the South had determined upon secession if Frémont should be elected, and only the election of Buchanan saved us. Feeling is running greatly higher now. As far as I can judge by the papers, we are between a state of anarchy and civil war. May God avert from us both!"

The colonel spoke with deep feeling—a feeling the doctor shared so strongly he could not trust himself to reply. But Eunice had heard but one word—

"secession." Her whole soul was in a turmoil of indignation and horror. Hardly realizing what she was doing, she, usually so calm and self-restrained, and with a modesty in the presence of her elders that verged on timidity, rushed impetuously into speech.

"Secession! Destroy the Union! That would be the act of traitors!" she exclaimed indignantly. "I am from New England. I am a descendant of those Puritans you have just accused of narrow-mindedness and bigotry—and perhaps they are all that; but no one can accuse them of not being patriots, or of being disloyal to their country."

Yet, with all her indignation hot within her, she still maintained her quiet dignity of manner; and Rex, who had at first fidgeted a little and dropped his eyes, embarrassed by what struck him as her "strong-minded" attitude, so alien to all her surroundings, lifted them at last and let them rest on Eunice with admiration and something akin to pride in his long look.

The colonel's dark-brown eyes expressed something of the same admiration as he hastened to disclaim all intentional discourtesy in his animadversions on her ancestors. But he seemed to feel, also, that in the little Puritan he had found a foeman not unworthy of his steel, and so, his apologies fully made, he added with the kindly smile natural to him in addressing a young woman: "Is it because the South threatens secession that you accuse her of disloyalty and lack of patriotism?" and as Eunice merely bowed her assent, he went on:

"Have you forgotten that his Britannic Majesty, in his treaty of peace after the Revolution, acknowledged the thirteen colonies by name to be '*free, sovereign and independent* states,' and there was no quarrel on our side with the phraseology of the treaty? And in 1786, you know, New England made many threats of secession, and Rhode Island did actually secede and was not readmitted until 1790. And in 1804, at the time of the purchase of Louisiana from Napoleon, New England was full of threats that it would secede from the Federal Union and form a Northern Confederacy. Later, Josiah Quincy said on the floor of Congress: 'If Louisiana is granted statehood, it is my deliberate opinion that it is virtually a dissolution of the Union, that it will free the States from their moral obligation; and as it will be the right of all, it will be the duty of some definitely to prepare for a separation—amicably if they can, violently if they must'; and from no quarter came any denial of this right of secession. Throughout the war of 1812 talk of secession was rife in New England, and very probably the only thing that prevented the formation of the Northern Confederacy at that time was the treaty of peace made with England. Now, my dear young lady, I don't want to throw any discredit on your forebears; I am not sure but they were well within their rights in all this talk of secession; but I only want to remind you that it is not the South alone that has shown itself so disloyal as to threaten disruption of the Union."

Poor Eunice! She was hurt twice: first in her

pride of an unblemished ancestry, and second, which was perhaps the more mortifying of the two, in her pride of scholarship. She could not remember that she had ever even read these damning facts of history, whose verity she could not for a moment discredit; and she had prided herself expressly on being well read in the history of her own country! She had no weapons with which to refute the colonel's arguments; there was nothing left to her but capitulation: but she was not of that obstinate feminine type that will never own itself beaten, and her surrender was made so sweetly that she took the enemy by storm in the very act of making it, and went down with colors flying.

"You have quite confounded me, colonel," she said in her sweet little prim way; "I find I must confess myself very ignorant of my country's history. I shall always be very humble hereafter about my Puritan ancestors, for it seems the Puritans of the North are no more infallible than the Chevaliers of the South. But, individually, I shall always maintain that loyalty to the Union is a far nobler and more patriotic sentiment than loyalty to any 'sovereign and independent state'!"

Dr. Charlton led and the colonel was the first to follow in the round of applause that greeted Eunice's little speech. To her surprise and confusion, she found herself the center of attention. The guests at the other tables looked up to see what had occasioned the commotion at the table of honor, and saw the grave Miss Harlowe all smiles and blushes as she

received the compliments and congratulations showered upon her. Then they saw the colonel rise to his feet with his wine-glass in his hand, his splendid figure erect, his waving hair a crown of glory, his dark eyes blazing. Lifting his voice to include the little circle of tables about his own, he invited every one to drink, standing, the toast he was about to propose:

"The Union forever! Pride of our fathers, may it be the joy and glory of our descendants!"

Eunice found herself on her feet with the others, a wine-glass in her hand,—she, who had never touched the hated thing in her life before,—and amid clinking glass and ringing cheers she raised it to her lips.

CHAPTER VI

A NEW ENGLAND CONSCIENCE

IN the confusion of many tongues that followed the colonel's toast Dr. Charlton took occasion to say to him:

"It gave me more pleasure than I can express to you Colonel, to find that you are so strongly on the right side. In the troubles that are threatening our beloved country, I have been building my hopes upon you, if worse comes to worse; and I have been eager to hear from your own lips that, whatever betides, you are for the Union."

The colonel looked troubled, and it was a long moment before he spoke. When he did it was with the air of having made a difficult resolve.

"My dear doctor," he said, "I am about to say to you something that I would say to very few. But I know that you will not misunderstand me, and I know that you will regard it as a confidence and not to be repeated. The strongest desire of my heart at this moment is that the Union may stand forever as it is to-day—unalterable, indissoluble. No greater sorrow could come into my life than to see the Southern States carry out their threat of secession. But my own

course, should they do so, is as yet uncertain. I shall be guided entirely by the action my State takes. If Virginia secedes, I go with her—my highest fealty is to my native State. But God forbid that day shall ever come!''

He spoke slowly and sadly, with no air of bravado, but rather of keen regret, and Dr. Charlton looked at him with sorrowing eyes, as one who understood too well and pitied too deeply to feel any anger.

Greatly to Eunice's distress, she found, very soon after the tables had been removed, that this was to be a dancing-party.

The lawns and verandas were brilliantly lighted by gaily colored lanterns, and now the moon had begun to pour upon them a flood of soft, golden light that paled the lanterns. The band, which had continued to play at intervals during supper, had gone off to find its own supper while the tables were being cleared away. Now it returned and took up its station nearer the commandant's house and began to play the ''Invitation to the Waltz.'' It was a signal the young people seemed to understand, and Rex, who had been talking to a group of girls at a little distance, hastily excused himself and hurried over to the corner of the veranda where Eunice was one of a little circle gathered around Uncle Robert.

''May I have the first dance?'' he asked in a low voice as he bent over the back of her chair.

Eunice straightened up quickly, as if electrified, and Rex could easily see, by the combined light of

moon and lanterns, the horrified look in her gray eyes. She might have declined very sweetly and been just as firm, but this seemed to Eunice an occasion in which her disapprobation should be expressed by the manner of her refusal.

"I do not dance," she said severely.

Rex was amused at the manner of his rebuff, but he was not easily discouraged.

"Oh, not a waltz or a polka, perhaps; but you would not mind walking through a quadrille with me, would you? This first one is to be a quadrille."

Eunice had very hazy notions as to what a quadrille might be, and to know that it was called a dance was sufficient. But by this time she had recovered from her first shock sufficiently to drop the severity, and she replied quite amiably:

"I shall have to decline, Mr. McAllister. I really know nothing about it, and I should only be an embarrassment to you."

Rex bowed his regrets and hurried away. He was in time to secure Miss Lydia, who had been skilfully avoiding the lieutenant, hoping that some chance might give her Rex instead; and whether it was by Rex's management or by accident, they took their places in the quadrille forming on the lawn just below Eunice's seat on the veranda.

Now Eunice had never so much as seen a dance of any kind, and try as she might to keep her attention fixed on what the colonel and Dr. Charlton were saying, her eyes would wander to the gay picture on the lawn below her. Rex danced the quadrille as he might

have danced the minuet, with stately grace and punctiliously "taking the steps," while Lydia, with her ruffles and laces gathered in one hand and the other held high in Rex's, curtseyed and pirouetted and romped through the dance with a saucy grace that fairly bewitched Eunice. And then, to her amazement, she discovered that the couple facing Rex and Lydia was Lucy and Willie, and Lucy's little feet were twinkling rhythmically to the music and her eyes were sparkling and her cheeks glowing while she went through the intricate movements of the figures with an ease and a fairylike grace that astonished Eunice. Where had a clergyman's daughter learned such an ungodly accomplishment! And so difficult did it look to Eunice that it seemed to her not the least of its sins was the valuable time that must have been wasted in acquiring it. None the less did she find that it was with difficulty she could turn away her eyes from so bewitching a sight.

But Eunice's conscience was of the consistent type that made watching a sinful amusement almost as great a sin as engaging in it, and as soon as she recalled herself to this fact she resolutely shut her eyes and ears to the bewitching sights and sounds. Only once, just before the end of the dance, did she almost unconsciously lift her eyes as the increased sounds of merriment forced themselves upon her unwilling ears; and there, just below her, was Rex's handsome face turned up toward her as he circled by in the merry "all hands round." He nodded gaily as he caught her eye, and his glance seemed to

say saucily, "Now are n't you sorry that you would n't dance with me?"

Eunice turned quickly away and did not look again, but she was not surprised, as soon as he could decently leave his partner after the quadrille was over, to find Rex by her side. He was begging her to try the next dance with him,—a waltz,—and here Eunice had not only her principles to sustain her in her firm refusal, her sense of maidenly propriety was so shocked at the mere suggestion of dancing a round dance with Rex that she was covered with confusion. And Rex, seeing her distress, good-humoredly desisted from annoying her. He sat down beside her, and before long had drawn her off into a secluded corner where the vines hung heavier and no obtrusive lanterns revealed them to passers-by and only faint gleams from the moon between the leaves shed a soft light; and there, in those congenial surroundings, he set to work, with an art against which Eunice's simplicity was defenseless, to awaken her interest in him and win her liking,—audaciously challenging her views and rousing her to their defense, showing deference to her intellectual superiority (the weak point in Eunice's armor, since pride of intellect was her besetting sin), and mingling with it all the subtle admiration dear to every woman and so new to Eunice as to be dangerously dear.

He took her back at last to Dr. and Mrs. Charlton and the little group of older people surrounding the colonel.

"I must resign Miss Harlowe to you, Mrs. Charl-

ton," he said, "until the next dance is over. Will you take charge of her?"

"Let me take charge of Miss Harlowe," interposed the colonel, springing to his feet gallantly and offering Eunice his chair.

"Thank you, Uncle Robert," answered Rex; "and please see if you can't remove her last feeble scruples on the subject of the Virginia reel before I get back. The dancing is to wind up with one, and Miss Harlowe has half promised to dance it with me—but only half."

"The Virginia reel!" exclaimed the colonel. "You surely have no scruples against that innocent romp, Miss Harlowe. I would not mind dancing it myself if I had Miss Harlowe to dance it with me. What do you say, Rex—will you resign in my favor?"

"No, sir—not even to you, Uncle Robert," answered Rex, deferentially, and with a glance at Eunice so ardently expressive of the joy he was anticipating in this dance, half real and half assumed, that Eunice was overwhelmed with confusion at what seemed to her such open wooing. Mrs. Charlton came to her relief:

"I really think, Eunice, you need not feel any hesitation about dancing a Virginia reel. Ask Mr. Charlton if it would be wrong. I defy any conscience to be more sensitive than his."

"It 's exactly as Miss Harlowe feels about it," said the doctor, gently; "we are each his own mentor. My own feeling is that a Virginia reel is only a graceful and well-ordered kind of game; but it is not for

me to decide." And then he smiled upon Eunice with such kindness and wise judiciousness in his blue eyes that Eunice yielded at once. If Dr. Charlton, whom she already began to regard as one of the saints of the earth, considered it no harm, who was she to set up her opinion against his? And she sent Rex off extravagantly joyful—in manner at least—at her primly yielded assent.

When she found herself one of the long line of girls drawn up on the moonlighted grass, facing the long line of men, with Rex directly opposite, her first sensation was a dreadful sinking of the heart. Why had she consented? She was only nineteen, but she felt herself years older than these gay girls beside her, some of whom were half a dozen years her senior, and she did not know how to descend to their youthful level. Then she knew nothing of the dance, and although Rex had assured her she would only have to watch the others and follow them exactly, the thought that she might make a blunder filled her with horror. Eunice took her dignity very seriously, and making herself ridiculous before these gay society people of the army set seemed to her nothing less than the deepest ignominy. But she was no craven; she had a sturdy Puritan courage that would not let her falter in a course once finally undertaken.

Rex, standing opposite, watched with amused interest the grim determination expressed in the rigid set of the slim figure and the dauntless glance of the gray eyes. He saw that she was following with painstaking scrutiny every movement of the dance; she had

no eyes for him. When it came time for her to take part in it, she made no blunders. She went through it with the precision of an automaton. There was no joyous abandon, no gay romping as with the other dancers, and Rex found himself smiling covertly at her seriousness and earnestness. He took every opportunity, as they came together in the figures, to murmur in her ear words of encouragement and praise for her success; but she hardly dared to smile up at him her grateful appreciation, so fearful was she that if she withdrew her attention one moment from the serious business of the dance she would make some false move or mortifying mistake.

Smile as he might to himself, Rex rather liked her seriousness and earnestness, and once when he caught on the face of Marcia Morris a half-sneering glance toward Eunice at one of her particularly formal movements, accompanying a little speech to her partner that he knew from the answering glance and smile must have been one of ridicule of Eunice, he felt an angry resentment. With all his faults, Rex was a gentleman to the heart's core, and he wished from his soul that Marcia Morris had dared to make that speech to him, that he might have resented it properly.

But creditably as Eunice had acquitted herself in the dance, it was no sooner over than the reaction set in and her troublesome conscience began to upbraid her. Twice had she violated it that evening: once when she had lifted the wine-glass to her lips and now in the dance, and it made the upbraiding of conscience but so much the acuter that she was painfully aware of

the contrast her rigidity and formality had made with the grace and abandon of the others. Rex's compliments had not reassured her. She had suspected him of discerning that she needed reassuring, and had been grateful to him for his intention while she had doubted his sincerity.

She had been trained in a religious school that teaches confession is good for the soul. She could not feel a consciousness of guilt without making confession of it. It seemed to her that it would but increase her sin to allow McAllister to believe that her conduct that evening met with her own approval, and no repentance could be genuine that did not begin with a confession of her fault.

They walked home along an avenue of maples and lindens that met over their heads in so close a leafy arch that the moonbeams could not filter through, and along a grassy path that led beside a dancing brook sparkling in the moonlight; and thence across the stone arch of a little bridge crossing the brook; and so on into the lower town where the old German settlers had built, solidly, cottages of stone and brick that were more like the cottages in their native Rhine provinces than those belonging to a new and timber-growing country; and where saloons and beer-gardens adorned every other corner, with soldiers drinking and shouting and clashing sabers in some, and students drinking and shouting and singing in others; where Eunice walked closer to Rex and trembled and shuddered at such open lawlessness, and Rex, feeling the trembling of the little hand on his arm (for those

were the days of that obsolete and happy custom of young people walking together arm in arm), drew it closer and strutted a little more, and felt all the joy of the strong protecting the weak. And all along this homeward way Eunice was struggling with her courage, or rather her lack of it. It was not until they had turned westward on old Langdon Street, with its stately homes shaded by venerable trees that had defied the storms of a hundred years, that she ventured, under their friendly shade, to say:

"Mr. McAllister, I shall not feel at peace with myself until I have said to you that I am very sorry for two things that occurred this evening."

Rex stiffened perceptibly, thinking he was to be taken to task for some shortcomings in attentions to Eunice, since that was quite Miss Lydia's way if she thought she had not received all the attentions due her.

"I cannot recall, Miss Harlowe," he began stiffly, "any respect in which I have failed—"

"Failed!" interrupted Eunice, puzzled, "I do not understand you." But she was not to be swerved from the path of duty now that she was well started in it, and for fear that she might be turned aside, she hastened on:

"It is not you that have failed—it is I. I have failed to be true to my own standards. Mr. McAllister, I am very sorry that I danced that Virginia reel, and I am sorry that I lifted that wine-glass to my lips—I did not taste it."

"Why, Miss Harlowe," remonstrated Rex, "I

thought you were quite convinced there was no harm in a Virginia reel since even Dr. Charlton said there was none; and as for the wine, you could not have refused to drink that toast—why, they would have been arresting you for a traitor!"

Rex spoke with a little good-natured ridicule. Miss Harlowe's scruples semed to him over-fine. Perhaps Eunice perceived the ridicule and resented it. Her tone was a shade colder, and if Rex could only have seen the tilt of her oval chin he might have called it obstinate.

"I presume, Mr. McAllister, we look at such things very differently," she said. "I consider that for me it was distinctly wrong to have proved traitor to my principles against wine-drinking even at the expense of seeming disloyal to my country. I could have proved my patriotism in other ways. And as for the dancing, I had not for that even the shade of excuse I seemed to have for the other."

Rex was irritated. "Such a pragmatic, dogmatic little Yankee!" he fumed inwardly. "She is impossible!" Outwardly he only put on his grand air and said with elaborate politeness:

"Would you object, Miss Harlowe, to telling how you would have proved your loyalty?"

"Oh, I don't know"—Eunice hesitated, beginning to feel troubled and less sure of herself before Rex's stately manner. "I suppose," she added brightly, "I might have made a little speech and said I approved the sentiment but disapproved the wine."

Rex lacked the quality that was often Eunice's

salvation—a sense of humor. He did not for a moment suppose that she was speaking humorously now, and he was trying to adjust to his Southern ideas the idea of a pretty young lady making a response of any kind to a toast and in such company. It appalled him for a moment, and then there slowly began to dawn in him a new-born appreciation and admiration of a moral courage beyond his own power of attaining, and especially inconceivable in any young woman of his acquaintance. He had been silent so long that Eunice was feeling still more troubled, saying to herself that talking to a young man was certainly not one of her accomplishments, and probably this arrogant Southerner was despising her as a prim little prude. She was almost startled, therefore, at the earnestness and sweetness of Rex's tones when at last he broke his silence.

"Miss Harlowe," he said, "I cannot share your views about either wine or dancing, but I can admire very greatly one who has such courage of her convictions as you have shown. It would seem to me a difficult thing for any one; it seems wonderful in a young and beautiful lady."

Rex could no more have helped his little concluding compliment than he could have helped being a South Carolinian. But whereas the Southern girl might have taken it lightly and answered it saucily, Eunice knew not how to take it, and was silent. Indeed, there was very little more conversation of any kind between them. Eunice was feeling a tremulous kind of pleasure quite new to her and that kept her silent,

and Rex was thinking seriously—an unusual occupation for him. And as they came in sight of the stone wall with its overhanging trees inclosing the college campus, Willie and Lucy caught up with them, and they all four walked up the broad pavement outside the wall, over whose red bricks the moonlight and the branches had thrown a witchery of lacework for them to walk on, talking merrily of the incidents of the evening and giving Rex no chance to make the one more speech of appreciation he had been seriously pondering.

But he found a chance, as he left Eunice at Dr. Charlton's door under the vine-wreathed porch, to hold her hand for a moment longer than was necessary and to say in a voice so low as to be almost tender:

"Good night, Miss Eunice."

No one could accuse Rex of ever missing an opportunity of expressing a real or assumed devotion when he desired it.

CHAPTER VII

CHOIR REHEARSAL

IT was ten o'clock the next morning when Eunice, hearing in her sleep a soft tap at her door, opened her eyes and said "Come in."

Cindie, the cook's little girl, entered, bearing carefully a tray on which a tempting little breakfast was arranged. She was called Cindie to distinguish her from her mother, whose name she bore; and now as she set her tray down on the table, and made her funny little curtsey, she said:

"Missie Charlton 'low youse better git up now and have some brekfus'. I 'se jist took some to Miss Lucy."

Eunice was very much taken with the pretty child —sweet as a cherub, she thought, until she opened her lips to speak; and she answered smilingly:

"It is very kind of Mrs. Charlton to send me my breakfast, and thank you for bringing it, Cindie; but is breakfast all over?"

Cindie, emboldened by the kind tones, answered more familiarly, and with something of the condescension she had heard her mother use on similar occasions:

"Laws, yis, honey; brekfus' done long 'go; it 's 'leben o'clock, mebbe."

It was not quite so late, really, but Cindie had very little idea of time, and she always wished to make her statements sufficiently strong to create a sensation. Eunice sprang up, dreadfully annoyed that she should have slept so late; and she had just bathed her face and hands a little, slipped on a wrapper, and thrust her feet into some bedroom slippers when Lucy appeared at the door with her little breakfast-tray.

"May I come in and eat my breakfast with you?" she said, looking like the fair young Dawn, Eunice thought, arrayed in a pale-blue dressing-gown, her golden hair a little disordered, and her cheeks with the fresh morning roses blooming in them.

"Yes, come in—do, please; but I am so ashamed to have been so lazy. What will Mrs. Charlton think of me?"

"Mother would n't have liked it if you had n't been, after being up so late for two nights; and Monday school begins, and this is your very last chance to be lazy for a whole week. Mother never likes to have us late Sunday mornings, so hereafter Saturdays will be your only chance to sleep in the morning."

"But I never sleep in the mornings at home. I am always up to breakfast, and I do not see why I should not be here."

"Even when you are out the night before, or up late?" asked Lucy.

Eunice hesitated.

"Now that I think of it," she said, "I don't think that I was ever up late. It seems to me I have been in bed by ten o'clock all my life."

"What did you do when you had callers, or went to parties? Did callers always leave at that early hour? And were your parties always over by that time?" persisted Lucy.

"I see," said Eunice, "I may as well make a full confession. There were never any gentlemen to call, and I do not believe I have been to a party since I was a child until night before last."

The air of incredulous pity—almost horror—with which Lucy heard this statement amused Eunice, and she went on, still further, enlarging upon the manless state of existence which had so far been her lot, and assuring Lucy that she had not missed them very much.

"Then I am afraid you won't like it here," said Lucy, dubiously; "there are so many of them: the students, you know, and sometimes the officers, but not many of them; and they all seemed to like you so much last night and at the patronee party. I am afraid you will really be bored by them."

"Oh, no," said Eunice, smiling and blushing; "I like it very much. In fact, it is such a novelty to me, I should n't wonder if I enjoyed it more than you, who have been accustomed to it always."

"Oh, I am so glad," said Lucy, ardently; "I should have been so sorry if you had proved to be a New England man-hater. They do have them up there, don't they?" And hardly listening to Eunice's

laughing denial of man-haters being indigenous to New England, she went on: "Do you know, I think it would be such fun never to have known any young gentlemen, and then suddenly come to where there were plenty of them. Why, I should think it would be right *exciting!*"

"It is," said Eunice, smiling at Lucy's earnestness; "but you must not let any of them know how unsophisticated I am. They might take advantage of my ignorance."

"Yes," said Lucy, taking her in simple earnest; "Rex McAllister would, I am sure. He is a dreadful flirt. You will have to beware of him." And then, not noticing that in spite of Eunice's efforts the smile had died away and the color was mounting steadily in her cheeks, she went on: "He flirts with everybody, especially if they happen to be new. But there is only one person that he really seems to care for, and that is Lydia McNair; and the funny part of it is that she seems to like him, too. I should n't wonder if it would be a match some day."

There was no answer from Eunice, and Lucy prattled on:

"To-night is choir rehearsal, and it meets here, and Mr. Rogers, the leader of the choir, asked me last night to invite you to join it. You sing, don't you?"

Eunice did sing; she was leading soprano in their little church at home, and she was entirely too truthful to say no. But she hesitated to accept the invitation.

"Who is in the choir?" she asked doubtfully; and

then Lucy mentioned the names, and did not mention Rex McAllister.

"Oh, you must surely join us," she urged, "we need sopranos so much. We have plenty of tenor and bass and good strong alto, but half the time I am the only soprano besides Miss Allen, who plays the melodeon and always helps me out when I am alone, for I have only a little bit of a voice. And then the rehearsals are such fun, I am sure you will like it."

And Eunice said she was sure she should, and she would join the choir and help all she could.

They had finished their breakfast, and Lucy rose to go to her own room to dress; but she put her head back in the door as she was leaving the room to say: "Rex McAllister does not belong to the choir, but he usually attends rehearsals to escort somebody, and I have no doubt he will be here to-night."

"I am glad of it," thought Eunice, grimly, as the door closed on Lucy. "It will give me a chance to show him I am not the soft bit of rustic innocence he has taken me for."

Her cheeks burned now with a very different emotion as she recalled the soft insinuations and tender glances of the night before. "Little Lucy, with her face of babylike innocence and fully two years younger than I in everything else, is twice as wise where men are concerned," she thought impatiently.

"Little Lucy" was wiser even than Eunice thought. Willie Dayton had said to her the night before:

"Does it strike you that Rex is making a dead

set for Miss Harlowe? There is nothing he likes better, you know, than a new face, and I hope she won't take him seriously. She impresses me as one of those dreadfully matter-of-fact people who take every word you say in dead earnest."

And Lucy, who was just a little out of humor with Willie, and was pleased by nothing he could say, had answered indignantly:

"Miss Harlowe is not 'dreadfully' anything. She is perfectly lovely! If she takes people seriously—why, people ought to be honest enough to be taken that way always! But I don't believe you need have any fears for her; she is quite able to take care of herself—and Mr. McAllister too, if necessary."

And Willie, who was determined not to quarrel, had answered:

"Oh, come now, Cousin Lucy, don't be hard on a fellow; you know I did not mean it that way. I like Miss Harlowe. She is a mighty sweet young lady, I reckon, and I don't want her to have any trouble with Rex."

But though Lucy had rejected Willie's warning at the time, it had returned to her with great force when Eunice made her confession of never having known any men, and it was responsible for her innocent disclosure.

The little melodeon had been moved out from its corner in the back parlor to the position of honor under the chandelier in the front parlor. The possibility of using the piano for the practice of "sacred music"

would never have occurred to any one: or if it had, would have been rejected at once, as savoring of the sacrilegious.

Around the melodeon in little groups were the members of the choir, waiting for some tardy arrivals, but employing the interval in a lively interchange of talk seasoned with much laughter. It all looked so easy to Eunice, and yet she was finding it difficult to keep up her share in it. To have been brought up all her life to think and talk seriously in an atmosphere where even smiling seemed to have been indulged in rather under protest, and now to be suddenly transported to a clime where lively talk and joyous laughter were the order of the day and night; where people smiled and chatted as easily as they ate and drank, gave her an uncomfortable sense of her own rigidity, against which she was making desperate struggles.

Much of the conversation of these pretty girls and gallant young fellows seemed to her silly and meaningless, but she envied them the ease and grace of their silliness, and she thought she would have been quite ready to exchange for it some of her more solid attainments. Fortunately for her comfort, it was the most dignified man in the room who was now gravely discussing with her the respective merits of "China" and "Peterboro," "Ortonville" and "Dundee." Eunice was well up in all the music between the covers of the old "Lute of Zion," and he found her excellent aid in selecting the tunes best suited to the little list of hymns he held in his hand, which they

had been looking out in the hymn-book and reading over together.

She was losing much of her constrained feeling, and beginning to enjoy herself in the sense she had of being on familiar ground, when she became aware that Rex McAllister was entering the room. Her eyes were fastened on the page before her and she did not lift them, but she saw him quite as distinctly as if she had. He was accompanying the organist, Miss Allen, for whom they had been waiting, and Eunice was conscious that after speaking a moment to Lucy he started toward her. She still did not lift her eyes, and was trying to go on with what she was saying to Mr. Rogers calmly and indifferently; but she must have got it very much mixed, for Mr. Rogers looked puzzled and begged her to repeat it.

By that time there was no ignoring the fact that McAllister was standing directly in front of her, in an attitude of mingled condescension and deference; the condescension being natural, and due to an inner feeling that a very fine Southern gentleman was making his bow to a bit of Northern simplicity, and the deference assumed as the manner likely to be most effective with so dignified and intellectual a young lady. It would be putting it very mildly to say that he was abashed when Eunice lifted her calm eyes, and with a formal "Good evening, Mr. McAllister," ignored entirely his extended hand and turned at once to Mr. Rogers. The hot blood rushed to the South Carolinian's face, his eyes flashed, and his hand dropped to his side, while he made an extremely low

bow of ironical deference, and then passed on, making the circuit of the room and stopping to talk for a few minutes with each young lady present. Witnesses to his discomfiture had not been wanting. Willie Dayton and Lucy had both been furtively watching the greeting with much interest, and Mr. Rogers had seen it and wondered. That made it of course so much the more galling, and Rex was fiercely brooding on revenge while he was uttering his pretty speeches. As for Willie and Lucy, they were amazed, and Lucy blushed a deep crimson for what seemed to her Eunice's unpardonable rudeness. She could see no reason for it at all, and it did not occur to her that her little remarks about Rex and his flirtations could have been responsible.

Eunice had acted deliberately in what had seemed to her the very best way to show to McAllister that she was no unsophisticated maiden, ready to listen to and accept all the sweet things he might find it pleasant to utter. She had wished to prove to him that she was quite a woman of the world, taking at its true valuation what he had already said, but unwilling to listen any further to his insincerities. She did not remember that she had no pretext for being offended, and that without such pretext to refuse to take a man's hand in a room full of his friends was to say in effect, "I consider you, sir, unworthy to touch my hand." She was really so unsophisticated that she had no conception of the rudeness of which she had been guilty, and was feeling now a glow of triumph at having effectually humbled the compla-

cent Lothario, instead of any remorse at having overstepped the bounds of good breeding. She hardly thought of it even in the light of having administered a reproof to McAllister; it was more as of having asserted her own position as a young woman who understood both herself and him.

There was a latent feeling of anticipatory delight, also, in the humble attitude she fancied he would assume until finally she might forgive him for his attempt to play with her ignorance and receive him back on terms of friendship. But for this latent feeling, there would have been too much of the alloy of pain mingled with the triumph; for in spite of her attempts to persuade herself differently, his efforts at winning her interest had not been in vain.

Even if she had had more experience with men in her own part of the country, she would have hardly been able to comprehend the fierce passions that her little act had aroused. In the heart of a Massachusetts man it might have produced a feeling of cold contempt or indifference toward the young lady who had been capable of such an offense; but in the heart of the proud and fiery South Carolinian it set the match at once to the volcanic passions that were always but lightly slumbering and ready to burst into eruption at a touch. It was a boiling and seething crater that he was at this moment carrying in his bosom, inwardly cursing his fate that the "Little Yankee" was not a man whom he might have knocked down at a blow and called out afterward. But since she was not, he was swiftly arranging in his mind a

line of revenge that would be quite as effective and devilish enough to satisfy his worst impulses. He was quick enough to perceive that her action did not denote indifference, but was probably incited by a feeling that she was yielding too easily to his influence, and was as much a determined resistance to it as scorn of him personally. None the less did he decide to make her suffer for the humiliation she had subjected him to—and before Rogers!—the last man he would have been willing to have witness it; for Rogers was a straightforward, honest Pennsylvanian who had more than once not hesitated to express his disapproval of the Carolinian, who though far from being the blackleg and toper that Rogers considered him, had none of the Northerner's prejudices against wine and cards.

Eunice's rebuff had not in the least shaken his confidence in his powers of fascination. He believed thoroughly that the citadel of no woman's heart could hold out if he laid siege to it in earnest—and that was what he resolved upon the instant to do. He should leave no wile unemployed until this cold little Yankee heart was absolutely under his sway; and then, when he had won it, he would fling it back at her with scorn and remind her of the time when she had dared to humiliate him openly.

Rex McAllister had never considered himself a bad fellow. Heretofore his flirtations, if not perfectly harmless, had been without any purpose of harm. He had been as much beguiled as beguiling. Also, he would have been ready to challenge any man who

dared to breathe that he was not the soul of honor. But if it had been suggested to him that this was not an honorable line of action he was laying out for himself, he would have defended himself with the plea that "all is fair in love and war," and "revenge is always noble."

As for Eunice, she was rather happy than otherwise. Her little act of self-assertion gave her a novel sensation of power, and she was beginning to enjoy the complex emotions of this new life which made the old seem tame and vapid by contrast. And she did not dream of the net of difficulties and entanglements she had woven for herself.

It was not until Mr. Rogers had called his choir together and Eunice had taken her place with the sopranos that Rex chose a seat for himself. Then he took one, a deep easy-chair which permitted an indolent, half-lounging attitude, well suited to express either easy indifference or romantic dejection (and he had not quite determined which it should be), and so placed that it not only commanded an uninterrupted view of Eunice, but made it almost impossible also that her glance should not frequently fall on him.

Eunice's voice was what her face would have led you to expect: a cool, clear soprano, without much magnetic quality, strong and a little prim in its deliverance, while an odd way she had of accenting the music with little movements of her body struck Rex as amusingly suggestive of the Yankee schoolma'am. It was a habit contracted, no doubt, from

having been for several years leader of the choir at home, and took with her the place of a baton as a means of setting the time for the rest. She was not without her own little conceits, also. She believed that she sang well, and Lucy, whom she unconsciously regarded as a mere child with a sweet little voice, was the only other soprano, and she felt the responsibility of her position. She liked to sing; she read music well, and was prompt in her time and unfaltering as a leader. Mr. Rogers, who stood beside her, evidently perceived her ability and rejoiced in it, and she was enjoying herself thoroughly when her glance fell upon Rex.

It had been part of her enjoyment in singing, the consciousness that Rex was listening to her, and she never doubted his admiration and perhaps surprise at her possession of such an accomplishment. Now to discover upon his face that look of half-cynical amusement was a mortifying disappointment. Her elation in her newly acquired power vanished at once; she became confused and miserably uncertain of herself. She felt that she must have made some mistake in her treatment of this man, who was neither awed nor admiring, but only amused. And feeling no longer sure of herself in any respect, she began to lose confidence in her singing, and for a few moments Mr. Rogers feared his leading soprano was not going to prove perfectly reliable.

Rex had not intended to be caught with that look upon his face, and for a moment he was inclined to be vexed with himself; but noting its effect upon her,

he keenly concluded that it might prove just as well, after all. By destroying her confidence in herself, he was preparing the way for repentance and humility on her part. When next her glance fell upon him, there should be upon his face either rapt admiration of her singing, which would soothe her wounded vanity, or deep and dejected reproach that would arouse her pity and remorse. He decided to use both —the admiration first and the reproach afterward. It was a long time before Eunice looked at him again, and she would not have looked then if she could have helped it. She dreaded to meet that smile that was half a sneer, but there was some compelling power in his steady gaze, and she did look at last, half defiantly. What she saw restored her at once to her self-esteem, and relieved her horrible sense of being ridiculed. Rex had contrived to throw a great deal of admiration into his eyes, and much of it was genuine. He liked music, he thought singing a most ladylike accomplishment, and, except for her little mannerisms, Eunice sang more than fairly well. Then, when he saw that the admiration had produced its effect, he pretended to be taken by surprise again, and rapidly changed his expression to one of mute reproach and question. Eunice had no weapons with which to meet his arts. She had been warned about him, but to be swiftly whirled from elation to self-abasement, back again to gratified vanity, and then to awakening pity and regret, left her with a dizzy sense of helplessness. She began to feel heartily sorry for her discourtesy, and to hope for some oppor-

tunity of apologizing during the evening. There would be none, of course, during the rehearsal, but that came to an end at last. They had tried over all the hymns and practised the opening anthem, her own selection, "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord," until Mr. Rogers said it would do, and dismissed them from further practice. At the clamor of merry voices the doctor and his wife came down to the parlor and mingled with the young people; they would have considered it very discourteous to their daughter's friends to have done otherwise, and the young people themselves would have missed their cordial presence.

But in the pleasant half-hour that followed no opportunity presented itself for her apology. Rex did not come near her, and Mr. Rogers, who had missed the bright animation of his coadjutor in the early part of the evening, rather devoted himself to her as feeling himself somewhat to blame. The company broke up finally and she had only a distant and very formal bow from Rex as he left the room with Miss Allen.

Eunice was quite miserable by this time, and when she went up-stairs she found, from a little cold reserve in Lucy's manner, that she too did not approve of her. They had grown into a warm friendship in these four days, and now Lucy went to her own room at once, without coming into Eunice's to talk over the evening, and she began to feel with acute mortification that she had probably sinned unpardonably against the conventions, and there is perhaps no kind of sin

that can make one feel more thoroughly uncomfortable, or dye the cheek with a deeper hue of shame.

Lucy did disapprove of Eunice, and for that reason had not followed her to her room; but her ardent little heart would not let her cherish such a feeling in silence, and she very soon concluded to go to Eunice and "have it out."

Eunice answered her knock with a quick beating of the heart, but she coldly waited for Lucy to begin, and she did not have to wait long. After one or two indifferent remarks on the evening, Lucy burst forth:

"Eunice, how *could* you treat Rex McAllister so? Has he done anything dreadful? I never saw anything so marked in my life."

Eunice's face was a picture of dreariness as she answered:

"Oh, I don't know; it 's all the fault of my never having known any young gentlemen, I suppose. I am afraid I will always be getting into trouble here, and it would be better for me to go home."

Lucy was touched by the hopelessness of the tone, and it accomplished what the tears of another girl might not have done. She put her arms around Eunice and said with quick relenting:

"Why, you poor girl, I suppose you really did n't know that you could offer no graver insult to a man like Rex than to refuse to take his hand. But it does n't make a bit of difference; it is n't worth being unhappy over. I am sorry I spoke of it."

"I wish you would tell me, Lucy, what to do," said Eunice, trying to feel at home in Lucy's encircling

arms, and feeling bitterly that her miserable undemonstrativeness would not let her do what she was really longing to do—give Lucy a warm kiss and hug to show her she appreciated her sympathy. "I see now that I have been very rude; do you think I ought to write him an apology?"

Lucy thought a minute, with a pretty pucker between her eyes that showed her perplexity.

"No," she said slowly; "I think I would n't—to Rex McAllister. There is no telling what use he might make of it. If it were Willie Dayton, now, it would be different; he would never do any but the most generous and considerate thing. I would wait a few days, anyway; you may have a chance to make a verbal apology; and if you don't, the worst that can happen will be that he will be perfectly furious, and find some means of taking his revenge, but it won't be anything very dreadful, I reckon."

Eunice did not quite like the way Lucy spoke of Rex. The balance was surging up now in the other direction, and Rex was in the ascending scale. She thought if Lucy had beheld the tender reproach she had seen in his eyes that evening, she would not talk of fury and revenge.

CHAPTER VIII

SUNDAY IN BELLAIRE

SUNDAY had always been a rather dreary day to Eunice. The going to church morning and evening was a relief from the dull monotony, and she was a devout admirer of her father's sermons and never failed to discover many beauties and much wisdom in them. Had they not been half as good as they really were, it is probable her devoted love would still have been blind to their imperfections.

But it was the long afternoon that Eunice dreaded when she dared not look into the books that she liked, and found nothing interesting in those she was permitted to read, when she was divorced from the little shuttle that was her constant companion in those moments she called idle during the week, and when there was no refuge even in music: both her father and mother would have been infinitely shocked at the idea of opening the piano on the "Lord's Day" even for the sake of playing "Old Hundred."

When she woke, therefore, on her first Sunday morning in Bellaire, there was added to the discomfort remaining from the experience of the evening before the vague dreariness inseparably associated

with the day. But this feeling was dissipated in the cheerful breakfast-room, where she found a table full of bright, rosy-faced boys, a little happier and a little more irrepressible than she had ever seen them before, their awe of the new teacher wearing off a little, and with nothing of Sunday gloom about them.

There was a quiet hour afterward for studying Sunday-school lessons and talks with mother, and then the little procession set off for church with Dr. and Mrs. Charlton leading, Lucy and Eunice immediately following, the Big Boys next, as Henry Sidney and George Edgar were called to distinguish them from the two younger ones, and Millicent bringing up the rear with Charles Ernest and Theodore Howard clinging to her hand on either side. As the Charlton pew was in the very front of the church, the filing down the aisle of the long procession always created more or less of a stir in the congregation, and likening it to the circus parade had become a standing joke with Henry Sidney, who had inherited something of his father's humorous way of regarding life.

It was early, but a very good congregation had already assembled, and as Eunice and Lucy took their places in the choir-gallery, Eunice could see that the back of the church was almost entirely occupied by the black coats of the students. At the cabinet organ sat Miss Allen, who gave her a smiling greeting, as did also the other members of the choir. Mr. Rogers came in a moment later, and stopped to speak to her, asking her to change her seat so that she would sit next to him, that he might be able to consult her if

necessary. It gave her a pleasant little sense of importance thus to be honored before strangers, and by the time they were ready to begin the services she was in good humor with herself and her surroundings and quite ready to sing her best. And then, in the very middle of the opening anthem, she discovered a graceful, indolent figure lounging in the corner of his pew, and so turned that he could gaze directly up at her. It gave her a momentary start, communicated to her voice in a mortifying little quaver; but she recovered herself instantly, and after that sang all the better for the consciousness of that steady gaze. Not that Rex was openly annoying: he had a way which, while it made Eunice perfectly aware of it, yet left him with the air of purposeless and careless glances.

But Eunice was not going to allow herself to be distracted by black eyes or "ungodly" thoughts during the sermon. She sat well back in her seat, where there could be no possibility of Rex catching even a glimpse of the tip of her white straw poke with its wreath of white and purple lilacs around the crown making a cool, fresh setting to the demure face and light brown curls. Then she gave herself up to the enjoyment of the sermon, and by the time the doxology had been sung and the benediction pronounced she felt herself once more an orthodox Christian whose Sunday calm could be disturbed by no bold glances.

Then there was the pleasant dinner-hour, full of bright discussion of the sermon and reviewing of the little incidents of the morning, lingering over the fruit

and coffee, while the soft airs and sweet sounds and odors of the late summer came through the open doors, and lingering so long that it was quite time to be getting ready for the afternoon service when they finally left the table. There Eunice saw again that elegantly indolent figure, and met that steadfast gaze, and, not knowing that church attendance was compulsory, thought that either Rex McAllister must be a more devout man than she had supposed, or, with a little conscious flutter, that there must be some attraction to draw him to church twice a day.

After the service, Mr. Rogers walked home with her, and Willie Dayton with Lucy; and when they reached the Iron Gate the young men proposed that they should take a little walk around the campus block. It was somewhat at variance with Eunice's Puritan ideas to take a walk for mere pleasure on the Sabbath, but Lucy seemed to think it all right, and she had a feeling that Mr. Rogers was so "good" he would not propose anything wrong; and the air had grown so cool and fresh, and the late sun was throwing long shadows over the grass, and the walk seemed very tempting and must be harmless. When they came to the turnstile opposite South College some one proposed that they should go inside and show Miss Harlowe the campus and West College. They walked up "Middle Path" toward "Rock Steps" under magnificent overarching lindens and elms, and Willie Dayton pointed out his room in West College. Eunice looked up to see it just as Willie added:

"There is Rex at the window now." And she caught sight of a moody figure leaning out and looking off toward the setting sun in an abstracted fashion, while in one hand he held a smoking cigar.

Eunice did not absolutely believe it was wicked to smoke, but she had grown up with a horror of the habit. There were no smokers in her family or immediate friends, and smoking on Sunday did seem to her to be pretty nearly wicked, but there was something desolate in the pose of the figure at the window —as no doubt Rex intended there should be—and it struck a little chord of pity in Eunice's heart, and went far toward condoning the sin of the cigar.

At the Rock Steps they met Dr. Charlton, with the boys and Millicent, out for a walk also, and they all walked back together in the friendliest fashion, just as if he were not the learned president of whom the students stood in great awe. At the little gate in the hedge the two young men stopped to take their leave, and arranged to call in the evening to take Eunice and Lucy to one of the "down-town" churches.

But when they returned at seven o'clock, they found the whole family gathered around the little melodeon. The doctor was a passionate lover of music, and had a deep, rich bass voice powerful enough to make one wonder where it could find lodgment in his slight frame; and the clear treble of the boys, Millicent's small alto, Willie Dayton's rather light tenor, Mr. Rogers's fine baritone, and the soprano of the three ladies made a pleasant ensemble. There was little regular Sunday-school music in those

days, but such as there was they sang for the pleasure of the boys, and then they valiantly attacked the most difficult fugue music or the most intricate harmonies they could find in the old "Lute" for the gratification of the doctor's musical tastes. When they had sung themselves hoarse, which was not until long after Mrs. Charlton had captured and convoyed to bed the younger members of the family, they spent the rest of the evening in pleasant talk, in which the doctor led in his friendly fashion, until Mrs. Charlton, coming in from her siege with the children and bearing in her hands a big dish of fruit, captured the talk and the young people together.

Willie Dayton, who knew the family customs and had kept a furtive watch on the clock, promptly at quarter to ten rose to go, and of course took Mr. Rogers away with him.

Outside, at the foot of the steps leading up to his room, Mr. Rogers stopped to say good night, but first he said in his grave way:

"I think, Mr. Dayton, Miss Harlowe is going to prove quite an acquisition; she 'll be a great help in the choir, and she 's a very charming young woman."

Willie's head was in a whirl, as it always was after an evening spent with Lucy, and he answered absent-mindedly:

"Yes, a little stiff and queer, but she 'll do all right." And not until he wondered at Mr. Rogers's abrupt good night did he realize what he had been saying. He called up the steps quickly to the rapidly retreating back:

"Oh, say, Rogers, I did n't mean that, you know;

I must have been asleep. I really think she 's a mighty sweet young lady."

Lucy stopped in Eunice's room for a little talk, as usual, and Eunice asked her three questions, which she answered in due order.

The first one was: "Do you always have such pleasant Sundays as this?"

"Oh, yes," said Lucy; "I think Sunday is the nicest day in the week, don't you? I am always looking forward to it."

Eunice did not feel obliged to answer, but went on to her second question: "Is Mr. Rogers studying for the ministry?"

"Oh, no; what makes you think so?"

"I suppose it is because he seems so grave and dignified, not at all like Mr. Dayton and Mr. McAllister."

"He is good enough to be a minister, I should think," said Lucy; "but he is going to study law, I believe. I don't know why he is so different from the others, unless it is because he is a Pennsylvanian and they are Southerners."

Eunice asked her last question with a little hesitation: "Which do you like the better, Mr. Rogers or Mr. McAllister?"

"Oh, Cousin Rex, of course; I know him so much better," and then, bethinking herself that Mr. Rogers had been showing himself quite interested in Eunice, she added quickly:

"But I have no doubt Mr. Rogers is far the finer man of the two."

And then Eunice had no more questions to ask.

CHAPTER IX

A SUGGESTION

WILLIE DAYTON flung open the door of the room in West College, tossed his hat on the bed, and sang out: "Hello! Rex, been in all the evening? We missed you at the doctor's, but I thought likely you were at Miss Lydia's."

"I was for a while," answered Rex, coldly; and then added after a minute, "I can't see what the deuce Miss Lydia finds in that puppy Watson! She keeps him dangling at her heels just because she likes to have a uniform around, I believe."

Rex had taken off his long, sweeping broadcloth coat, and hung it carefully up on a little contrivance of his own for keeping it in shape. He had also removed his tightly fitting boots, and was now comfortably arrayed in a study-gown of cashmere in soft browns and reds, while his feet were incased in black broadcloth slippers heavily embroidered in chenille, doubtless the gift of some Southern sweetheart. The feet and the slippers were resting comfortably on the square table that occupied the center of the room, in close proximity to a Greek lexicon, Paley's "Evidences," Butler's "Analogy," a box half full of

cigars, and a disorderly collection of papers. His position gave a luxurious angle to the big splint-bottomed chair he was sitting in, and on the broad tablet affixed to its right arm lay a yellow-backed novel—one of Balzac's, untranslated, for Rex particularly affected the French. In his hand he held a cigar, of course, but he was only smoking sufficiently to keep it alive.

Willie had not answered Rex's last remark. He perceived at once, from his tone and his lowering brow, that he was in a very bad humor, and he knew from experience that the wisest course at such times was to let his cousin alone. He proceeded therefore to divest himself of his "good clothes" and make himself comfortable after Rex's fashion, whistling diligently the while as a gentle intimation that conversation was entirely unnecessary. Willie himself was in the state of exaltation in which an evening spent in Lucy's presence usually left him; unless, as occasionally happened, she had been pointedly unkind and left him proportionately depressed.

He was a sweet-tempered, honest, generous-hearted young fellow, a South Carolinian also, and Rex's cousin, but as unlike him as possible in temper and in personal attractions, Willie himself would have said and Rex would have thought. He was several years Rex's junior, and not particularly brilliant intellectually; but by dint of faithful work he maintained a fair standing as a Sophomore, while Rex, who might easily have led his class, through indolence and indifference stood a fair chance of being its

"flag-bearer," as the man who brought up the rear was called in those days. Willie was shorter than Rex, and of a sturdier build, with light-brown curls and honest blue eyes and pleasant, courteous ways that made him a general favorite in his circle of friends, but did not constitute him a lady-killer, as his cousin liked to be considered. Willie himself had no ambitions in that direction. He liked all the young ladies, and was indeed of that Southern temperament so susceptible to feminine charms that he would always be sure of being "in love," as he called it, but never with more than one at a time, and very honestly and desperately for the time.

It was Lucy Charlton's golden curls and sweet blue eyes and dainty ways that held him captive now. But Lucy had many admirers and was withal a little of a coquette; and while she liked Willie and had admitted him to the relation of cousinship, which meant both a great deal and nothing at all, she was sometimes annoyed by his slow ways and inclined to look down upon him a little disdainfully.

He sat down now to the table and began writing, while Rex watched him for a few minutes impatiently. He was secretly dying to hear some account of the "little school-ma'am," though he was not willing to betray his curiosity to his cousin.

"Oh, come, Billy," he said at last, "don't bother with letters to-night; I have n't had a soul to speak to all day, and I am dead tired of myself."

Willie turned quickly, for this was a more amiable address than his cousin's former manner had led him to expect.

"Well," he said pleasantly, "whose fault is it? Why did n't you come over to the doctor's this evening? Mrs. Charlton asked for you. You know you always like to talk to her."

Rex listened with a slight curl of his short upper lip. "You know very well I could n't go there after having been as good as slapped in the face by that priggish little Yankee school-ma'am. By Jove, I wish she was a man, and I could call her out! I would like to show her that a Southern gentleman is not to be insulted with impunity."

There was an access of fury with his last words, and Willie hastened to speak soothingly. "I know; it 's too bad. Do you know, I don't believe she knew she was insulting you. Those New Englanders have queer ways, you know; and I fancy she was more than likely trying not to appear too much interested." Then he added cunningly, "You know yourself what a heart-smasher you are, and it 's likely she had never met your sort before and was afraid of you."

Willie was working on sure ground when he was working on Rex's vanity. He knew it and was a little ashamed of himself for stooping to such means; but he hated a fuss, especially where his friends the Charltons were concerned, and he was determined to heal the breach, if possible. Rex had comforted himself with the same explanation, but it was soothing to his vanity to hear it offered by Willie also, although he only ejaculated, "Nonsense!" But Willie had seen the scornful curl of the lip give way to a half-smile of conscious power, which Rex had not been entirely able to suppress, and he went on:

"It struck me several times to-day that she was sorry, and would be glad of a chance to apologize. Suppose you give her the chance and see."

Rex was quite sure those timid glances had already dumbly entreated his forgiveness, and there was only wanting an opportunity to have it expressed in words. There was nothing he would enjoy more than to have a scornful young lady humbly beseeching his forgiveness, and he had been dreaming all day of the exquisite pleasure he should take in her apology, and had quite carefully rehearsed in his mind the exact manner in which he should receive it. There should be magnanimity and haughty courtesy mingled with cold reserve and the air of having received a wound so deep that the scars could never be obliterated. Then he intended gradually to thaw a little, but still to treat her with such stately courtesy that she should see that though as a gentleman he must needs accept her apology, as a man he could not quite forget what he had suffered at her hands. He was in a hurry also to begin on that line of revenge that he had hastily planned the night before and had been brooding over all day with no idea of relenting because of the timid, regretful glances he had received. They had mollified his wrath, to be sure; but the sense of personal affront remained, and he was quite fascinated also by the idea of the amusement as well as triumph he would get out of it. He was perfectly sure, therefore, that only the opportunity was wanting for the apology, but the question was how to make the opportunity. He could not, of course, call on her, or seek

her in any way, until the apology had been made, and he hardly hoped that she would dare to make the opportunity. He was a little afraid that she might write him about it, and he did not desire that. It would be so difficult to express in writing all those delicate and complex emotions that he intended to express when he received her apology, and his triumph would lose much of its sweetness if he could not see her trembling and blushing embarrassment—if he could not, metaphorically, raise her from her knees and gradually soothe her perturbations.

So he answered Willie's last suggestion impatiently: "How the deuce can I make an opportunity? Shall I go over and call, and beg her to beg my pardon?"

Willie smiled. "Of course not; but you might—"

But Rex interrupted him: "Not that I care a picayune whether the little Yankee ever begs my pardon or not; but you can see for yourself it 's going to make it deucedly uncomfortable about my ever going to the Charltons' as long as she is there—and I suppose she is a fixture."

"Yes," said Willie, eagerly; "that 's just it. You don't want to break with the Charltons; they think a sight of you, and they are such good friends to us both. Don't you think, considering the circumstances, you might write her a little note and ask for an explanation? You can be entirely on your dignity, you know. Say you think you have a right, as a gentleman, to ask from her, as a lady, some explanation of her treatment of you the other evening."

Willie's suggestion struck Rex as a very good solu-

tion of the difficulty, except that it might result in the written apology that he did not want. But his quick mind saw a way to prevent that, and he decided at once to adopt Willie's plan, though he answered him with an assumption of indifference.

"All right, I will think over your suggestion, Willie. Of course I will be glad to have it all square with the Charltons again, for your sake and my own."

He rekindled his cigar, which had quite gone out, and picked up "La Cousine Bette," in whose pages he appeared to be buried while Willie turned again to his letters.

CHAPTER X

A FACULTY TEA

EUNICE found her first morning in school a trying one. There were the new pupils to meet and, what was much more embarrassing, the mothers of most of them, who had accompanied their children to see the new teacher. Then, when the formalities of the opening were over, there was the classifying and arranging the studies of each individual pupil; fatiguing work, demanding the patience of Job and the wisdom of Solomon, Eunice thought.

But it was over at last; and at a quarter past twelve Eunice had on her little bonnet, and had turned the key in the lock with a feeling of relief that her first and most trying day was ended. Partly from the heat, to which she was unaccustomed, and partly from fatigue and excitement, her head was aching badly, and she found it difficult to remain at table through the noon-day dinner with its pleasant air of excitement, as the children eagerly recounted the events of the first morning at school. She had been able to eat but little, greatly to Mrs. Charlton's concern, which found voice when Eunice asked to be excused from dessert.

"You poor child!" she said anxiously, "you are all tired out! Yes, go to your room and lie down, and I will keep every one away from you this afternoon."

In her own room the cool green light, sifting through the branches of the linden and through the bowed shutters, was grateful to her aching eyes. When she first lay down, a throng of feverish thoughts went trooping through her brain, of everything that had happened in these few days; but gradually they all slipped away but the one grateful thought of everyone's kindness. She fell asleep thinking of Mrs. Charlton's grace and beauty and vivacity, which made her the most charming woman she had ever known, and of dear Dr. Charlton, for whom, with his scholarly ways, his kindly humor and old-fashioned gallantry, she had begun to feel a romantic veneration.

She had slept an hour or two when she was awakened by a soft knock. She sprang up, went to the door, and opened it. It was Lucy.

"I hope I did not wake you," she said. "Here is 'Judge' with a note for you, and he refuses to deliver it to any one but you."

Behind Lucy stood "Judge," bowing and scraping and politely grinning:

"Yes, miss, Marse Mac 'low I was to gib de note to Miss hehse'f," he said, as he handed her a tiny white envelop, sealed.

"Oh, it is from Mr. McAllister," said Lucy, smiling; "he sent me an invitation to a concert once, and

'Judge' gave it to Charles Cook, junior, who forgot all about it, of course, and I never received it. I suppose he was afraid of the same fate for this one unless 'Judge' delivered it into your own hands." Lucy spoke to Eunice by way of explanation, but "Judge" answered her gravely:

"Yes, miss, dat 's it; Marse Mac 'low I gib it to nobody else, 'cep'in' de young lady."

Eunice stood looking at the note in her hand, half frightened, half pleased; she could not remember that ever in her life before she had received a note from a young gentleman, but she had reason to be a little afraid of this one.

"Will you come in, Lucy, while I read it?" she said.

"Are you to wait for an answer, 'Judge'?" asked Lucy, turning to him.

"Yes, miss, Marse Mac 'lowed I mought git one," returned "Judge," with a succession of bendings and pullings of his forelock without which utterance seemed impossible to him.

"Very well, then, you can wait in the hall," said Lucy, going into Eunice's room and closing the door.

Eunice had already broken the seal, and was reading with flushed cheeks:

"Mr. McAllister presents his compliments to Miss Harlowe, and would beg to say that he feels an explanation due him for Miss Harlowe's action of Saturday night. If Miss Harlowe will permit, he will do himself the honor of calling this evening to hear from her *personally* of what offense he has been guilty to call forth so marked a token of her displeasure."

Eunice read it over twice, the crimson spot in either cheek growing deeper as she read; then she handed it to Lucy and said:

"I wish you would read it, Lucy, and tell me what I must do. Don't you think it would be better to write my apology? He has given me the opportunity, I think, by his note."

Lucy read it also carefully; then she said slowly, and with no idea that she was innocently playing into Rex's hand:

"No, I don't think I would. You see, he particularly requests a personal explanation, and unless you have some well-defined excuse, it is easier to make things clear and all right again by talking them over. It is so easy to be misunderstood in writing."

"Yes," said Eunice; "but it is because I have n't any excuse—only an apology—that I thought I would rather write; but perhaps it will be better to see him."

She went to her writing-table, got out some paper from the drawer, and took up her pen:

"What shall I say? I really don't know how to write it."

Notes were of small moment to Lucy; she had any number of them neatly piled away in her little desk: invitations for concerts, for lectures, for driving-parties to the mountains or the springs, for walks to the barracks or the cave, for Sunday-evening church, for Wednesday-evening pray-meeting or Saturday-evening choir rehearsal—all of which were included in the list of Bellaire gaieties. So she answered lightly:

"Oh, I would make it as brief and formal as possible. 'Miss Harlowe's compliments to Mr. McAllister, and would be happy to see him this evening.'"

Eunice obeyed, and the note was written, sealed, and given to "Judge," patiently waiting in the hall.

Dr. and Mrs. Charlton were spending the evening out at a faculty tea-party given by the senior professor in West College.

I wonder if anywhere in the world in these days of form and fashion and late dinners people get together and have such good times as they used to at those old faculty tea-parties. "Tea" now is associated in our minds with a crush and jam, light refreshments, and lighter talk, but it meant something very different in those days. It meant sitting down comfortably to a long table covered with snowy damask and shining with polished silver and glass and dainty china. There was sure to be a noble platter of fried chicken at one end of the table—if it were the season when chickens were young enough to fry; not broiled, but cooked as only the good old darky cooks of our youth could cook them: fried to a crisp golden brown, and covered with an unctuous cream gravy of the same color. If it was not possible to find sufficiently young chicken for the *pièce de resistance,* the same noble platter was filled with fried oysters, golden brown also, and hot and tender and not greasy, and the oysters flanked by a beautifully decorated dish of chicken-salad, made after the recipe of Professor Tiffin himself, the epicure of the faculty

—"little vinegar and less mustard; much cayenne pepper and more oil." And whether chicken or oysters were in the platter, there were always waffles, so light and crisp that the most sensitive dyspeptic need not fear them, with bowls of mixed cinnamon and sugar to eat with them for those who liked it; and there was also, always, hot Maryland biscuit, snowy with just a delicate tinge of the necessary brown, and innocent of soda or yeast powder or any other death-dealing drug; and of course there were wonderfully concocted pickles, and shaking jellies glowing like rubies, and rich preserves; and for the second course a little very nice cake and such fruit as happened to be in season, from scarlet strawberries to luscious peaches, served with thick yellow cream—though the second course was of little moment in the mind of a good Bellaire housekeeper compared with the substantials. And to crown the feast there was always coffee, hot and clear and strong enough, with the exquisite flavor of the Mocha easily distinguishable, and rich with cream. Indeed, the coffee was a test of any Bellaire tea-party, and the anxious hostess never felt that her supper was a complete success until the gentlemen, and even some of the ladies, began to send up for a second cup of her "delicious coffee."

But there was no lack of a finer kind of entertainment also at these teas. The creature comforts, far from deadening the intellect, seemed to stimulate the flow of wit and reason. There might possibly be a little formality and dullness while the company were gathering in the "front parlor," and the ladies

were all more or less in sympathy with the hostess's anxiety in the critical moments preceding supper, and the husbands were insensibly sensitive to the mood of their wives. But from the moment they were all seated at the table, husbands scrupulously separated from wives—from that moment until ten o'clock, when, exact almost to the minute, they said good night, there was a constant ripple of gentle hilarity.

Professor Tiffin was host this evening, and he readily proved himself, not an epicure only, but also a most polished man of the world, who could discourse delightfully on the latest literature or the society news from Baltimore and Philadelphia, the centers of fashion for Bellaire. Opposite him at the head of the table sat Mrs. Tiffin, a pale, aristocratic-looking blonde, who bore the enviable reputation of being able to cook a dinner or entertain a parlorful of guests with equal ease and skill. And there were Professor Fieldman and his wife, two jovial souls who for months had been keeping up a running wager as to who should tell the most and the best stories. And there was the bachelor professor, a big, fine-looking man well up in his forties, with a magnificent head covered with Jove-like curls. He had a beautiful old lady for a mother, and two bright and handsome sisters; and it was for their sakes, no doubt, that he had never married, though he seemed to enjoy his single estate and the freedom it gave him to worship moderately at many shrines, and to display to untrammeled advantage his two talents—for he was

an accomplished musician, and even more accomplished in conversation.

Perhaps conversation is not quite the right word to apply to Professor Haywood's brilliant monologues. There was no doubt about their brilliance: they were well worth listening to, scintillating with wit, studded with epigram, flashing on every subject in the wide range of literature and philosophy; but sometimes, if you liked to talk yourself, you found them just a little tiresome. There had been rumors that if Miss Lydia McNair, who was an heiress in her own right, would have looked kindly on him, he would have gracefully submitted to matrimonial bonds; but we never knew certainly, for Miss Lydia kept her own counsel in such matters, and the professor was not likely to publish his defeats. Certain it is that they were still on terms of amity, and although he no longer haunted the McNair parlors as he had once done, he went there at intervals, and it was reported that she treated him with as much nonchalance as she did any of her younger beaux, and had been known more than once to interrupt his most brilliant flight with a saucy, "Now, professor, you rest awhile and let me talk."

Then there were the professor's two charming sisters, always, of course, included in faculty parties. Miss Kate was a dashing brunette, bright-eyed and rosy-cheeked, with all the wit of her brother, but so toned down by the feminine desire to please and kept in bounds by feminine intuition, that warned her at once if she were in danger of becoming a bore, that

she was as fascinating as she was beautiful. I remember as a child we used to sing a song beginning, "Miss Kate was once a laughing girl, Eyes of jet and teeth of pearl," and I never for a moment doubted that the song referred to beautiful Miss Kate Haywood. Her sister, Meta, was of a more stately type: fair and large, with dignified composure of manner. She had a way of listening with such sympathy and apparent comprehension as to give the impression that she had herself been talking most learnedly or wittily, as the case might be. I never remember to have heard her utter more than the most ordinary commonplaces, but the tone of their utterance was always so well chosen and they were delivered with such an air that I do not think that at the time they impressed me as commonplace at all. It was this talent of hers as a sympathetic listener that had, no doubt, won for her the reputation of being quite a Madame de Staël in learning and wit.

There was another bachelor professor in the faculty: a Johnsonian style of man, big and ungainly of person, pompous and uncouth of manner, but of undoubted learning and ability. It seemed to be always Miss Meta's lot to sit next him at the faculty teas, and by a judicious use of her eyes and pretty smile, and a proper distribution of "Noes," "Yesses," and "Indeeds!", she produced such an impression on the honest and impressionable heart of the awkward scholar that he invariably found an opportunity later in the evening to say to one or two of the married members of the faculty, "I find Miss Meta a most

charming young lady. Does it ever strike you that she is—ah—in fact—*erudite?*"; and the professor in whom he happened to repose this confidence as invariably responded with some jocose suggestion that it was time for him to be thinking seriously of giving up his bachelor freedom and making some charming woman happy by joining the ranks of the Benedicts, —which suggestion the professor always received seriously, though somewhat sheepishly, and promised to think of it. As nothing ever came of these periodical seizures, it is to be presumed that the next morning, in his comfortable study, surrounded by his beloved books, the vision of the fair charmer faded until the next faculty tea.

But any description of any kind of faculty party would be very incomplete without a mention of the two Misses Perkins. They did not properly belong to the faculty by any consanguineous connection with that charmed circle; but no faculty dame would have dared to give a function, however small and informal, without including them in the list of invitations. Two splendid New England women, born in another century, and belonging even in my childhood to a fast passing generation; of an imposing presence and an elegance and propriety of manner that would have enabled a discriminating stranger to have conjectured at once that they were at the head of a young ladies' boarding-school. The educating and polishing of young ladies had been their life-work, and from Maine to Georgia they were widely known as elegant women and distinguished educators.

Miss Caroline rather overshadowed her younger sister, Miss Phœbe; for Miss Phœbe, by virtue of being the younger, had come to be regarded both by herself and her sister as perennially youthful, and cherished the modest and girlish graces they both considered suitable to her. I never believed that this was an intentional affectation on Miss Phœbe's part; it was the force of long-continued attitude. So, while Miss Caroline discussed ably the topics of the day with the men she met, giving clear-cut views on all subjects, Miss Phœbe sat primly by with folded hands and an amiable smile of attention in her faded blue eyes.

Miss Caroline was broad of frame and almost masculine in the effect of strength her physique gave. Her eyes were gray and still keen, rarely needing the assistance of glasses, though she never hesitated to use them if they seemed necessary. She always wore on her hair, iron-gray and her own, a square of black-thread lace with long side-tabs to which was added on party occasions a little purple ribbon; or if the party was an unusually fine one, the purple was lightened to lavender. Her dress was invariably of black silk, stiff and shiny, with straight voluminous skirts, finished at the neck with a rather small but rich lace collar fastened with a cameo brooch. In the very plainness of her dress she impressed one with her strength verging on masculinity.

Miss Phœbe, on the other hand, had all the small feminine likings for gay ribbons and soft laces, and as far as possible she tried to follow the prevailing mode.

Now that hoops were in, she had timidly ventured on a small one, though she felt every time it caught on an obtrusive door-scraper—which was not seldom—that she was wearing it at the risk of her life. Her skirts were flounced to her waist; her sleeves were wide to admit of pretty under-sleeves, and the surplus opening of her bodices was filled in with soft blond or delicate lace. Her caps, too, were butterfly creations, caught up at irregular angles with tiny bunches of narrow pink-satin ribbons, and resting on a false front of richest chestnut hue. As for her eyes, they had long since lost their keenness of vision with their luster, but Miss Phœbe preferred all the inconvenience and uncertainty of half-blindness rather than confess to glasses.

Dear soul! who that has a heart can find fault with that tender clinging to the romance of her girlhood? I never heard that Miss Phœbe had ever had a lover, but it is enough to know that she was once sixteen and had all the pure, sweet, timid dreams of a possible lover that are as much a part of those bright, unfolding years as the fragrance is of the rose. And it is not impossible to realize it of Miss Phœbe, in spite of her faded eyes, the primly set mouth, the rigidly erect and angular figure with no trace of girlish grace remaining. There is a suggestion of it, like the faint perfume that still clings to withered rose-petals, in the modest folding of the snowy lace across the maidenly bosom, and in the rosy tint of the ribbons in her cap. But my imagination refuses to conceive of Miss Caroline as ever having had a girlhood filled with

dream-lovers or real ones. I might easily fancy her a boy playing at football or "shinny," but a coy and sensitive maiden—never!

And now these were the prominent members of that old faculty circle gathered about Mrs. Tiffin's table that Monday evening, including, of course, our dear and genial Dr. Charlton, without whom every gathering would have lost its center of sunshine and warmth, for that was the effect of his ready flow of kindly wit and gentle humor; and his beautiful wife, whose sparkling vivacity and gracious ways charmed us almost as much as her radiant beauty.

And this night at Mrs. Tiffin's the little company did not break up promptly at ten. It was the first social gathering of the season, and they had all the long vacation experiences to compare. Some of them had been to the mountains, and some to the sea; Professor and Mrs. Tiffin in Europe; Professor Haywood at White Sulphur Springs, where he was sure to meet the fashion and beauty of the South; and his brother bachelor professor buried in the British Museum, delving among its archives for material for his book that he had been faithfully at work upon for years.

And when it was almost time to be going Professor Fieldman challenged Dr. Charlton to a game of chess, and that was one of the good doctor's weaknesses in which he yet found little time to indulge, and which Mrs. Charlton encouraged as little as she did his other weakness for punning. It seemed to her a great waste of time to pore over a chess-board for

hours, when one might be reading some charming book or enjoying a delightful dish of conversation.

Mrs. Tiffin, noting the doctor's wistful look, and perceiving that he was about to decline, added her persuasions to the professor's, and herself arranged the little chess-table in a quiet corner where they would neither interrupt the flow of talk nor be disturbed by it. And as the hour of ten came and passed and the little circle saw their head sitting unmoved by the cuckoo-chime that proclaimed the hour, they ventured to linger a little, too. But they could not feel perfectly at ease after that admonitory sound, and so conversation languished, and gradually, one by one, the ladies withdrew to Mrs. Tiffin's room to put on their bonnets, and the gentlemen formed a half-circle around the players and silently watched the game. And that is one of the essential differences between men and women. Whoever saw a circle of women watching a game in which they could have no hand! They go to base-ball and to foot-ball, but it is not the game that attracts them: it is the gay and eager crowds. As a rule, all the daughters of Eve must have their finger in the pie or the flavor is not to their liking.

A rustle of skirts and a gentle murmur of voices at length proclaimed the return of the ladies, and Mrs. Charlton floated up to the table where her husband sat, his finger laid along his nose, his eyes fixed on the board, oblivious to everything else in the world. The game was at a critical point, and, almost to the horror of the interested circle of spec-

tators, she laid her hand lightly on the doctor's shoulder:

"My dear, do you know it is almost half-past ten?" she said.

"Impossible!" ejaculated the doctor, never taking his eyes from the board, nor in any way moving a muscle not required by the act of articulation.

"Yes, dear, and we must be going."

"Wait one moment, my love," said the doctor, putting his fingers on his king and then venturing to glance hurriedly up at her.

The board was clear of men, except Professor Fieldman's king, the doctor's king, and one knight, with which he had been vainly striving for a checkmate: Professor Fieldman's king stood on his rook's square, the doctor's knight on the bishop's second, and his king on the knight's second; there was no use of struggling longer; the doctor moved his king to the bishop's first and proclaimed a stalemate with quite an air of triumph, for the professor was a player of some repute, and kept in good practice by his wife, who was as fond of chess as she was of stories. Then the doctor arose, flushed with success, made his courtly apology to Mrs. Tiffin for keeping such late hours, and said his pleasant "good night" to every one else.

Half-way across the long walk between West and East College they heard the sharp click of the little gate in the hedge, and a little further on they passed some one who took off his hat and made a low bow. It was dark and the doctor could not recognize him.

"My dear," he said, "that seems to be some one coming from our house. Could you tell who it was?"

"I think it was Mr. McAllister," she answered; "but it seems to me he has been staying rather late."

"Mr. McAllister!" said the doctor; "I did not know he called on Lucy; I thought it was always you he came to see."

"Oh, he calls on Lucy sometimes," said Mrs. Charlton; "but I fancy this time it was not Lucy, but Eunice."

"Ah, to be sure—of course!" said the doctor.

CHAPTER XI

A WHITE ROSE

IT had been agreed between them that Lucy should be in the parlor with Eunice when Rex McAllister arrived, as Eunice felt she would like the support of Lucy's presence in the first encounter. Afterward Lucy was to withdraw on some pretext. So the first few minutes of McAllister's call, save for his distant and ceremonious greeting to Eunice, were as unconstrained and comfortable as possible. The pretext came without any effort on Lucy's part, and rather sooner than she had intended.

Up-stairs in "mother's room," just over the parlor, there arose a tremendous racket. It had been threatening for some time: the noise of shrill singing mingling with shouts and the scuffling of feet, and an occasional sound as of a fall, shaking the ceiling. But now the din waxed louder. The falls were frequent and heavy, making the globes on the chandelier rattle and threatening destruction to the frail glass.

"Oh, those boys!" exclaimed Lucy. "Father and mother are out, Cousin Rex, and I am mother of the family. Will you excuse me while I investigate this disturbance?"

"Certainly, Cousin Lucy," said Rex, promptly; "and call on me if you find you need any assistance."

The sights and sounds that met Lucy as she opened the door of her mother's room might have appalled her if she had not often encountered them before. In the middle of the room Henry Sidney and George Edgar were engaged in a "wrastle," and at this moment were rolling over on the floor vigorously pommelling each other, while hanging over them, delight beaming from every pore of his shining black face, was Charles Cook, junior, who was restrained from taking a hand in the scrimmage himself by no respect for color, but because, as he would have put it, "Two on one 's no fair." At sight of Lucy he fled ignominiously to the lower regions, and the two boys sprang to their feet, for their wrestling had begun to be tinged with earnest, and, like the two little gentlemen they were, they were heartily ashamed of the temper and quite ready to shake hands, while Lucy turned her attention to the rest of the din, which had been going uninterruptedly on through the fracas of the Big Boys, and its adjustment.

In the crib, a wide old-fashioned one on rockers that had soothed the slumbers of every baby in the family from Lucy down, were the four younger members of the family and Cindie. On one side sat Charles Ernest and Cindie, and on the other Millie and "Dorie," as the little four-year-old was called, a loving abbreviation for Theodore. He would sometime arrive at the distinction of being called by his full name, Theodore Howard, but for the present he

was only "Dorie." The four pairs of short, chubby legs were stuck through the wide spaces in the railing of the crib, and as they rocked they were singing at the top of their voices, to a monotonous tune of their own composing pitched in a high key:

"Bye, Baby bunting;
Papa 's gone a-hunting," etc.

Between them lay little Baby Ned, his golden curls lying in a tangled mass on the pillow, one little fist doubled up under the dimpled chin, the long dark lashes lying on the pink cheeks, and the dewy lips half parted. He rolled from side to side with the violent rocking, but he seemed to be sleeping, except as a more vigorous swing of the crib flung him roughly against its sides, when through the parted lips would come a sleepy gurgle of laughter like the soft ripple of a tiny brook, and the children, perceiving that he was not yet "sound," would redouble their exertions, singing louder and rocking harder, as if to compel the attendance of the drowsy god.

There may be sceptics who will say it is impossible for any baby to be soothed to sleep by such vigorous methods, but the history of the Charlton babies, or, at least, the four younger ones, goes to prove that they are sometimes quite as efficacious as softer ways.

The combat of the Big Boys had not at all disturbed the singing or the rocking, except that once or twice Millie's tender little heart had been stirred with anxiety for George Edgar, whose cries, she was sure,

sounded as if he were getting hurt. But four-year-old Dorie reassured her:

"Ho! that 's nuffin, only fun! big boys always play like that. I will, too, when I 'm big."

Now Lucy hurried to the cribful of children and spoke to them gently.

"Hush, children, you are making too much noise. Miss Eunice has a caller in the parlor; I don't know what she will think of you!"

That name had already begun to be a talisman with them, and they were instantly silent. Then perceiving that Baby Ned, the moment there had been a cessation in his stormy rocking, had dropped off into a sound sleep, Lucy told the children to get out of the crib softly, so as not to waken Baby, sent Cindie down-stairs to her mother, set Charles Ernest and Dorie to pulling out their low trundle-bed from beneath the high four-poster, where it was concealed during the day by the white valance, and with Millie's aid she soon had the two little fellows tucked snugly in their soft white bed.

In the meantime there had been a few moments of embarrassing silence in the parlor after Lucy's departure. In a straight, high-backed chair near the center of the room, Eunice sat primly erect, save that her head was a little bent, her curls falling forward from above her ears in straight lines on either side of her face, half concealing it. Her attitude was due to the fact that she held in her hand a little shuttle on whose swift flying back and forth her eyes, with their dropped lids, were conveniently intent.

The Charlton family had already discovered that Eunice and her shuttle were inseparable. She had been bred in the good old New England way of never allowing herself to sit with idle hands. She carried in her pocket the little shuttle with its spool and neat ball of finished tatting, and between breakfast and prayers it came out, or when sitting in Mrs. Charlton's room for a little talk. Lucy had not been surprised to see it produced while they were awaiting McAllister's arrival in the parlor, but she had experienced a little shock when, the moment the first greetings were over, Eunice had calmly resumed her work. Lucy innocently supposed that it required all one's attention to entertain a caller properly; and to see Eunice sit there so calmly, with no feeling of responsibility as to the entertainment of her guest, was not only surprising—it was a little irritating.

Rex found it a little irritating also, after Lucy had gone, to find himself sitting opposite that unresponsive figure without the least chance of producing any effect with those delicate shades of acting he had counted upon, as long as her eyes were so pertinaciously fixed on her work. He felt his temper rising and an almost irresistible impulse to say, "Confound that tatting, Miss Harlowe! Will you be kind enough to pay a little attention to a guest who feels that he has already been sufficiently snubbed?"

But he did not say it, and there was something in the quaint figure, with its drooping face, that attracted him powerfully in spite of his irritation. He could not know, of course, what a struggle was going on

under that calm exterior, and how Eunice was screwing up her courage to make that dreaded apology; nor did he guess the effort with which she finally raised her head and said quite calmly:

"I owe you an apology, Mr. McAllister, for my rudeness to you at choir rehearsal. I have no explanation to offer; I cannot quite understand it myself. It was a sudden impulse, but I regret it exceedingly, and am very much ashamed of it."

Rex had his line of action all laid out, and so he resisted a more manly impulse to accept her apology at once and heartily. It helped him to resist it also that her eyes had again dropped upon her work, and her shuttle was flying swiftly back and forth. He said coldly:

"Thank you, Miss Harlowe, for deigning to bestow a moment's notice upon me. I will take it as an additional kindness on your part—if you can reconcile it with your conscience to spare me a few moments more from your work—if you will endeavor to explain to me what I had done that should have caused you even a momentary impulse to treat me so unkindly."

Eunice could not conceive that Rex should think he had grounds for another grievance because she had occupied herself with her tatting—a very proper and becoming employment for a young lady receiving a call, she thought, and a comfortable refuge for her eyes in case of embarrassment. But she dropped her hands in her lap and looked up at him, her clear look a little troubled at the coldness of his

tone. She had felt very much both the embarrassment and the humiliation of putting herself in an apologetic attitude toward this young man so shortly after their first acquaintance, but she had unconsciously comforted herself with the thought of the delicate kindliness with which her apology would be received, and the instant return to their former pleasant footing. Now when she met the cold, hard look in the black eyes fastened on her, mingled with her disappointment in the way he had received her apology was a little sense of injustice. It stirred her quiet soul, and she said courageously:

"Mr. McAllister, I have but one explanation to make. I came here from a quiet New England village, where I had known nothing of young gentlemen and the fashion of their conversation. You will remember, perhaps, the tone you took toward me from the first —such, I suppose, as you are in the habit of employing toward the young ladies you meet. I probably did not understand you perfectly, and thought you were presuming on my ignorance of the world; and I foolishly resolved to show you on Saturday night, by seeming to be very indifferent to you, that I was not so unsophisticated as you had taken me to be. I see now that it was the surest proof of my ignorance; but I have said that I am sorry, and I do not know that I can do anything further."

As Eunice spoke her courage rose steadily, and it seemed to Rex there was a defiant ring in her last words. Her eyes met his calmly, but with a little spark of an unusual fire in their cool gray depths.

This was not quite what he had intended. He had thought to melt her and bring her very humbly to his feet, when he would turn magnanimous and restore her to her former elevation. But he could not help admiring her in this new phase, and mingled with his admiration was just a little awe of a woman who seemed so meek and simple, and yet did not succumb at once to his all-conquering wiles. He saw that it behooved him to change his tactics, and he did so quickly and gracefully.

"Miss Harlowe," he said, as he bent upon her his softest look and his most winning smile, "you have been very frank and very generous, and I feel now that it is I who have the apology to make for forcing you to an explanation when you had already made the *amende honorable*. But I cannot be entirely sorry, since it gives me the opportunity of vindicating myself to you. I have never presumed upon your ignorance. I recognized at once your rare charms of mind and heart and person, and perhaps yielded to them more readily because they were of a kind new to me in their manifestation. But it is my Southern ardor that is to blame for betraying that interest to you, and I do not wonder that you have considered me presuming and punished me accordingly. If you will restore me to your confidence and esteem, I will promise to do my best not to offend again."

It was all said with such apparent sincerity and humility, accompanied by the most pleading look in the eyes, that were now as soft as they had been hard, that Eunice would have had to be made of sterner

stuff to resist him; and she forgave him with a smile that lost for once the constraint that usually characterized it, and was wholly sweet and natural.

But Eunice had never fully recovered from the headache of the morning, and the little excitement through which she had just passed, combined with the heat of the evening, made still more oppressive by the brightly burning gas, brought it back in full force. She grew very white when the excitement of the explanation was all over, and Rex, who had been exerting himself to entertain her and put her perfectly at her ease, noticed it at once.

"You are not well, Miss Harlowe," he said; "it is the heat of the room. Let me take you out on the veranda, where it is cooler. It is insufferably hot in here."

He rose as he spoke, and held out his hand as if to persuade her to come with him; and she meekly rose, too, and followed him through the low windows on to the veranda.

There was a roof over the front door which formed a square four-pillared porch, and at the end toward the campus a close lattice covered with honeysuckle screened from all observation on that side. A low wooden seat ran along this lattice, and in the corner made by the turn of the railing and one of the pillars, Rex found a comfortable seat for Eunice, where the light from the open hall door fell full on her face. He himself sat on the same seat, but with his back to the light, and he congratulated himself on the pleasure he should find in watching her changing

expression without himself being observed. The air was sultry, there was evidently a thunder-storm brewing, and indeed there were flickering gleams of distant lightning and low, almost inaudible rumblings of thunder; but there was sufficient air stirring upon the veranda to make it a welcome relief from the hot parlor, and Rex insisted that Eunice should not try to talk if her head ached. He himself talked on in low tones, telling her of life on a Southern plantation, and describing his own home just out of Columbia, where the air was pure and invigorating. He described the big plantation house, with its wide galleries and lawn shaded by palmettos and fig-trees. He told her of his handsome old father, and dwelt lovingly on the sweetness and beauty of his mother, and how they both united to spoil their only child until he sometimes thought he deserved a good deal of credit for being no worse than he was. Rex could talk well, and he was talking with a purpose now. He wanted to impress the simple New England maiden with an idea of his own magnificence at home, and perhaps excite in her some little longing for the life of luxurious ease he depicted his mother as leading, waited upon by troops of devoted servants.

Eunice would have said she was an abolitionist if she had ever been questioned on the subject, for she knew her father was one; and when she thought on the question at all, she felt keenly the horror and wickedness of slavery. But Rex had painted life in the South so artistically and so artfully that it could not but look very tempting to her just now, with her

"He was talking with a purpose now."

head aching and the thought of to-morrow's work and another hot day before her. She was resting her head against the pillar, turned a little away from Rex, but listening to him with a half-smile hovering about her lips, while a delicious feeling of languor and rest stole over her. For almost the first time in her remembrance, she felt a longing for a life without work, where she could do only the things she wanted to do, and might have a perfect right to be lazy. She still held her tatting loosely clasped in her hands resting on her lap. There had been a moment's silence: Rex had been watching her face, and did not fail to read in it the half-longing for a life like the one he had been describing. He lightly touched the tatting that lay in her lap, and the hand that held it.

"Do you know, Miss Harlowe," he said, "I do not like to see you doing this stuff. It makes me feel that you are always at work, and there is never any rest for you; and those dainty little hands were surely made to lie idle sometimes, just as they are now."

"But it is not work," said Eunice, rousing herself a little; "and I like to do it. I greatly prefer it to sitting with my hands folded."

"But it makes you seem so dreadfully industrious," said Rex. "*Don't* do it, please, when I come to see you, will you?"

He wanted to clasp the hand that held the obnoxious tatting, but he did not quite dare. Eunice answered him simply, but with a slight blush, "Certainly not, if you do not like it"; and then Rex rose to his feet.

"I know it is very inconsiderate of me to keep you here when your head aches; you must forgive me. I will not stay a minute longer. We are good friends now, are we not?" he continued, as Eunice also rose, "and you will not again refuse to shake hands with me?"—putting out his hand. "I am sorry for the poor head," he said, half tenderly, as Eunice put her hand in his; "but I hope it will be better to-morrow." Rex knew exactly the right degree of pressure to express a respectful admiration just bordering on tenderness, and he was careful not to overstep the limit.

"Now," he said, as she gently withdrew her hand, "go right up-stairs, please. I can see you are suffering, and I will step into the parlor and turn down the gas and close the windows; that is the way Mrs. Charlton has trained me. And then I shall stop outside on the veranda and light my cigar, and if you will come to your window and give me some sign that you have reached your room all right, it will be a great relief to my anxiety. You look so white and weak, I feel as though there were danger of your fainting on the way."

"Oh, no," said Eunice, a little embarrassed by his empressement, but determined to treat it lightly; "I am perfectly well, except for a little remnant of a headache. Please do not feel any anxiety on my account."

"But I do," he persisted, trying to take her hand again, but Eunice evaded him. "That little white rose you are wearing in your hair—drop it down to me

from your window, and I shall know you are not suffering, and it will be an immense relief, I assure you."

"Oh, no, Mr. McAllister," said Eunice, hastily; "I tell you I am perfectly well, and it would be a foolish thing to do."

"Perhaps my anxiety *is* foolish," he returned gravely, with a sudden change of tone; "but drop the rose, then, as a sign that our compact of friendship shall never be broken."

"Mr. McAllister," said Eunice, feeling that she must stop what she had begun to think was a very foolish contention, "I am not quite sure that we have made any 'compact of friendship'; but if we have, I am sure it does not need a rose to ratify it. And now I must say good night." And she entered the door.

"And you will not do it?"

Eunice shook her head, but tempered her severity with a smile and turned away.

He called after her softly: "I shall wait here for it. I am sure you cannot be so hard-hearted."

Eunice heard him closing the parlor windows as she went up-stairs. She stopped a moment at Lucy's room to say good night and to tell her that she was going to bed immediately, as her head still ached. To Lucy's look of inquiry she added: "It is all right. Mr. McAllister has accepted my apology, and we are very good friends." Then she went to her own room, but before turning up the gas she stole softly to the window and looked down through the bowed shutters. It was too dark to distinguish a figure at

first, but there was a little red glow that she recognized must be Rex's cigar, and gradually she thought she could make out a dim outline leaning against one of the pillars. She felt that he was looking up at her window and waiting. She thought she would watch him a few minutes, and see how long he would stand there; but as she watched there seemed so much patience and faith expressed in that motionless figure that it began to move her strangely. Slowly she lifted her hand to her hair and unfastened the rose. Yet she did not intend to throw it down; she thought that would be unutterably silly. But the longer she watched that motionless figure the more compelling grew her impulse to drop it, until finally she held it over the open space in an agony of shame and hesitation. She had just fully resolved *not* to drop it when it fell—she was never quite sure whether of her own volition or not. She heard the soft thud on the floor of the veranda, saw the red spark dart quickly forward, and then heard a low but distinct and joyful:

"Thank you, Eunice!"

She covered her face with her hands and turned away quickly, almost moaning, "What *have* I done! what have I done!"

As for Rex, he had tried to believe that he was sure it would come if he only waited long enough for it; but he knew, by the joyful emotion of surprise that he experienced when he heard that soft thud, that he had not really expected it. It was a greater triumph to him because it had come after such long

waiting, for he knew that she must have been watching him all that time, and he could guess through what agonies of indecision before at last she had been almost compelled to throw it down. It was on the joyful spur of the moment that he had whispered, "Thank you, Eunice!"—boldly using her name. He half trembled at his audacity, but he was determined to tremble at nothing, now that he had gained so signal a triumph, and it elated him, strangely enough, more than greater ones had sometimes done. He pressed the little flower to his lips, and then put it carefully away in an inner pocket and threw himself down in the seat Eunice had occupied, and which commanded a view of her window. He did not expect to see or hear anything further from her, but he liked to watch it, and he took it as an omen of good that the light was not turned up. He knew that there are thoughts that do not harmonize with gas-light, and he hoped she was thinking them.

He sat buried in such deep thought that his cigar soon died out and he flung it away. The fact was that Rex was relenting a little from his scheme of vengeance. Eunice's apology had been so sweetly made, it ought to have more than satisfied any man of generous impulses. But Rex's self-love had been so carefully nurtured by his friends and family that it had become an overweening passion, and it was difficult for him ever to forgive an injury inflicted upon it. Yet there was a charm in Eunice's quaint simplicity and in the truth and earnestness of her nature that was beginning to affect him strangely. Had she been

the most accomplished coquette, she could not have used more powerful devices to draw him to her than her formal little turns of speech, combined with the fluctuating color that leaped so suddenly to her cheek and died so suddenly away, and the rare lifting of the shy eyes to meet his. It had not been all acting when he had seized the rose and pressed it to his lips; and if his long waiting for it had made it a greater triumph when it came, it had also made it all the more powerful to set his heart beating in quick throbs and the color rising in his dark cheek.

He was beginning to relent now, and for half an hour he had been trying to decide whether he should abandon this hot pursuit before the little Puritan's heart should really be engaged, or whether he should go on recklessly, regardless of consequences. The sweetness of the pursuit lured him to go on with his plan; it was the stirring of a better nature than he gave himself credit for that made him hesitate. At the end of a half hour of hard thinking he was no nearer a decision than at the beginning. He could only promise himself that for a few days at least he would keep away from the little schoolmistress, and perhaps then he would be better able to decide upon an ultimate line of action.

Bethinking himself at last of the time, he rose, and softly whistling a bar of "The Soldier's Farewell," which he hoped might reach the ears for which it was intended, he descended the steps, passed through the tiny gate in the hedge, and on his way to West College met Dr. and Mrs. Charlton.

CHAPTER XII

A MORNING WALK

"MY dear," said the doctor, thoughtfully, as he closed the door behind him and began the slow pacing up and down the length of the room that was a sure sign with him of perplexed cogitations, "do you think it is quite right for Mr. McAllister to stay so late when we are both out?"

"I hardly think he has been here at all," answered his wife. "While you stopped to lock up and put out the lights, I ran up-stairs, and both Lucy and Eunice seemed to be in bed and asleep. He may have been simply passing through the yard."

"Possibly," said the doctor, "and I hope so. I would not like him to begin any marked attentions to Miss Harlowe, and I think he has seen a good deal of her in the few days that she has been here. He is an agreeable young man, and to a young woman who has seen as little of the world as Miss Harlowe he would no doubt be very captivating. But he is not the kind of fellow to make her happy, even if he should be serious in his attentions, and I hardly think he is likely to be permanently attracted by any one so unlike himself."

"No," said Mrs. Charlton; "I hardly think she is the kind of girl to attract Rex McAllister; but I almost wish she was—she would do him a world of good."

"Oh, no, my dear," said the doctor, stopping suddenly in his walk and frowning slightly; "I know Rex is a favorite with you, and *you* can do him good; but a young and inexperienced girl like Miss Harlowe could not help him. You will have to look out for her a little, my dear; for I fancy she knows nothing of young men, and I should be sorry to have her suffer any hurt in her affections through such a reckless fellow as Rex. If I read her aright, she will be slow to allow herself to become interested in any one; but it will be a serious matter with her if she once permits her affections to become engaged. And you know how it is with Rex. He likes to amuse himself, and a flirtation seems a harmless pastime with him."

Mrs. Charlton was inclined to think her husband a little hard on Rex, who was a prime favorite with her; but before they had finished their conference she had promised that if there seemed to be any danger she would do her best to save Eunice from possible entanglement.

Through the week that followed, Mrs. Charlton was convinced that her husband's anxieties were groundless, for nothing was seen of Rex at the house. As for Eunice, for the first few days it was a relief not to see him; she was overwhelmed with an intolerable sense of shame whenever she remembered

the dropping of the rose, and dreaded seeing in his eyes, when she should meet him, a recognition of her foolishness. But as the days went on, and she saw nothing of him, she began to feel still more keenly that she probably had so far lost ground by her silly little act and too ready yielding to his request as to destroy the regard for her and interest in her which had seemed to be both lively and genuine. She now longed to meet him, that she might discover whether he held her in any altered estimation. She felt quite sure that she should meet him at choir rehearsal on Saturday evening, and even had a hardly confessed hope that he might make an engagement with her as escort for that event. This hope was crushed, however, on Friday morning, by the receipt of one of those tiny white envelops inclosing a request from Mr. Rogers for that honor. Of course she could do nothing but accept his invitation; and although she realized that it would be an intense disappointment if one should come later from McAllister, she also rejoiced a little in the feeling that he would recognize she was sufficiently in demand to require urgency on his part if he desired to be first.

But no little white note came from Rex. And, still worse, he did not appear at choir rehearsal. Her chagrin was the more acute when she overheard Willie Dayton say, in reply to Miss Allen's inquiry as to his whereabouts, that he was at a little card-party at Miss McNair's. Eunice remembered very distinctly what Lucy had told her about Miss McNair and Rex McAllister, and she had a very vivid recollection also

of the air of rightful appropriation with which Miss McNair had carried him off on the night of the patronee party. There was something shocking also to her Puritan ideas in the sound of "card-party," and she began to take herself roundly to task for allowing her thoughts to dwell on one who was, no doubt, committed elsewhere, and whose "walk and conversation," she felt sure, were not such as her father would approve, or she ought to desire, in a friend. She determined on the spot to banish him resolutely from her thoughts, while her cheek burned with the remembrance of her folly.

She saw him on Sunday, however. He was in his old seat, and she could see, without appearing to, that, as on the Sunday before, he kept his eyes fixed upon her most of the time. He was at the foot of the gallery stairs—waiting for her, no doubt—when she came down; but Mr. Rogers was beside her, and she devoted herself to him assiduously, only letting her glance rest for a moment upon Rex as she vouchsafed him a frigid bow. But in that brief moment her eyes met his, and saw in them nothing but the friendliest feeling mingled with disappointment at not being permitted to walk home with her; and in spite of her effort at self-control, tongues of vivid color leaped into her cheeks, and her eyelids dropped quickly to escape his glance.

Rex was disappointed in not being able to walk home with her, and the frigid bow was hardly what he had been looking forward to; but he was not entirely displeased with her attitude. The signs of

confusion did not escape his keen glance, and flaming cheeks and dropped eyelids did not betoken calm indifference. He had congratulated himself on his self-restraint in keeping away for a week, trying to convince himself that he was acting solely from a generous consideration for her. But he was secretly conscious of a feeling that to give her a chance to miss his presence and desire it was as potent a means as he could use to increase her interest in him. So long had he been accustomed to use the wiles of a flirt that they had become second nature to him; and even when he was most resolving to be honest and manly in his intercourse with the little Puritan, he was unconsciously calculating the effect of his line of action. He had half thought that he would make an engagement with her for church that evening; he decided now not to do so, congratulating himself upon practising still further self-denial.

He repented of his self-denial, however, when he met Rogers going toward the doctor's about church-time and divined that he had an engagement with Eunice. There was no love lost between the two men. They belonged to different college fraternities, but there were stronger reasons for their latent antagonism in radical differences of temperament and character. Mr. Rogers was grave—almost stern—of temper, with fine old Quaker blood in his veins that could make little allowance for the youthful follies of the hot-headed Southerner, who, in his turn, looked down upon Rogers as a pragmatical, self-righteous fellow, bigoted and narrow. Rex could not conceive that such

a man could stand any chance with a woman, compared with an accomplished man of the world, as he considered himself; but a little twinge of jealousy when he saw Rogers pass through the gate in the hedge warned him that it was not well to allow a possible rival too many chances.

He spent part of the evening pacing up and down Middle Path, its heavily shaded gloom lighted only by the tiny glow of his cigar. He was dreamily trying to decide for himself the question that had been lying in the background of his thoughts all the week. Should he permit himself the idle pleasure of a vigorous flirtation with this semi-rustic maiden or not? He was half tired of Lydia McNair's dashing ways. The fumes of the wine that had been served around the card-tables the night before were still lingering in his brain, and left him in a state of feverish unrest, which made the image of the cool, calm Puritan maiden particularly attractive.

He felt himself in no way pledged to Lydia, although he was conscious of having often said what might mean much or little, according to the humor in which it was taken, but he believed that, in spite of her careless, offhand ways and her reputation for coquetry, Lydia McNair really liked him, and that it would take but a little more earnestness on his part to make the matter serious between them. He liked Lydia, too, and sometimes had thoughts of "going in in earnest," as he phrased it; but though he enjoyed her bold, pleasant ways, she was not, after all, his ideal of womanhood. This little Puritan, prim and unso-

phisticated though she was, came in many respects much nearer the dainty ideal he secretly cherished. Not in every respect; her prim and formal ways amused him; his ideal woman was to have the gracious ease of a woman of the world, while retaining the dainty and delicate bloom of exquisite femininity. He had no compunctions as to the manliness of saying as much as he had said to Lydia McNair, and saying no more. It had been Greek to Greek through all their intercourse, and he very well knew that she was keeping Lieutenant Watson on the tenterhooks as a reserve until she should be sure of his intentions.

The lieutenant was a manly young fellow, honestly infatuated with Miss Lydia, and Rex had a sincere liking for him, and was not sure but the greatest kindness he could do Miss Lydia was to leave the field free for the lieutenant.

The result of his cogitations as, tired of walking, he threw himself down on Rock Steps to rest while he came to a decision, was that he would let matters drift. He would no longer shun Eunice, and if Rogers had any intentions in that direction, he must look to his spurs, for an invincible *chevalier des dames* was about to enter the lists against him. And then he drew from an inner pocket a little white rose pressed between the leaves of a note-book, and assured himself that he possessed a guerdon that proved him already high in favor, and Rogers or another would find it difficult to oust him from his position of advantage.

Eunice awoke the next morning with a pleasant consciousness that it was Monday and a week's work lay before her. Monday always seemed to her like the beginning of a new life; and, always the most energetic of little women, she felt herself endowed with a double portion of energy on Monday mornings. It added to her satisfaction that she had neither regrets nor self-reproaches to torment her; nothing but the calm remembrance of a mildly pleasant evening spent with Mr. Rogers, and she liked calm, and was more than ever resolved that she should permit nothing hereafter to disturb it.

Breakfast at the Charltons' was an early meal. By half-past seven it and morning prayers were both over, and Eunice decided that instead of waiting for Lucy, as was her usual custom, she would go over to her school-room at once and finish correcting some papers before the hour for the opening of school.

It was a beautiful morning, and she felt the fine air tingling in her veins as she walked down the winding path that led to Lovers' Lane. She had just passed through the little gate that opened into that beautiful overarched pathway, when she discovered Rex McAllister coming toward the upper end of it along a narrow, shaded footpath running by the southern side of the campus at right angles with Lovers' Lane. His head was bent over a book he was apparently studying, and Eunice half stopped a moment, meditating a retreat, for she thought he had not seen her, and she dreaded meeting him.

But as she hesitated he looked up from his book,

waved his hand to her from a distance, and began to walk quickly toward her. She was still inclined to turn and run, but a sense of her own dignity forbade her yielding to her inclination; there was nothing for her to do but to go on and meet him. Her veins, which had been tingling with joy, were now throbbing heavily with dread, and her step, that had been free and spirited, was slow and constrained. She could think of nothing but the white rose and the whispered "Thank you, Eunice!" and the face that she would have liked to keep so calm and impassive she felt was suffused with blushes.

He met her half-way down the path, with hand extended and a joyous greeting.

"How is Miss Eunice this beautiful morning?"

Eunice could not refuse her hand, but she managed barely to touch his with the tips of her fingers, while she answered formally:

"Quite nicely, I thank you, sir."

Rex smiled as he turned to walk beside her without asking her leave. The smile was partly for the quaint New England expression, but it was still more for the determined frigidity of her manner. He did not mind it; he promised himself much pleasure in watching it gradually thaw under his skilful direction.

"It seems a long time since I last saw you," he said softly, with a look that might have been effective if she had seen it, but was thrown away on her dropped eyelids. Eunice did not answer; she would not have known how to reply to a little speech of that kind, even if she had been in a less unbending mood, but she

was now absorbed in trying to devise a means of escape.

Rex was not discouraged, but went on boldly:

"This has been a very long week to me. I purposely kept away, fearing my too frequent coming would annoy you; but I was sustaining myself with the hope of seeing you at choir rehearsal, when I received an invitation that I could not decline and which destroyed that hope."

Eunice knew what that invitation was, and she guessed there had been no desire to decline it, and she was filled with a sterner determination to resist his advances. She was recovering her equanimity and she lifted her eyes calmly to his as she answered:

"It has been a very pleasant week to me. You remember that I told you how little I had seen of young society. I think I have seen more of it in this week than in all the rest of my life; there have been so many party calls at Mrs. Charlton's, and I have found it very agreeable."

Rex shot a quick glance at her from the corner of his eye. Was she developing into a coquette? Was this said with the idea of rousing his jealousy or punishing him for his absence? There was no hint of coquetry in her manner, but he determined to assume the rôle of injured lover.

"That is the worst of it," he said reproachfully; "while I have been lonely and discontented, with only my dreams and my memories to comfort me, others have been basking in your presence, sunning them-

selves in your smiles, and listening to your sweet voice."

Eunice was disturbed. Her one glance at him had shown him even handsomer than she remembered him, and there seemed a ring of true feeling in his voice; and though she knew he had no right to talk to her in that way, yet when she remembered the rose, she felt that she had only herself to blame for his audacity. Yet the more she felt the fascination and danger of his presence, the more determined she was to put an end to their present false relations. She answered him, therefore, severely:

"Mr. McAllister, I thought you promised me not to offend in that way again. Indeed, I believe it was agreed that if there was to exist any friendship between us, it was to be on the condition that you were to dispense with the little gallantries to which I am not accustomed."

They had reached the Iron Gate, and Rex was holding it open for her to pass through. She added coldly:

"Our ways separate here, I believe; I wish you good morning."

"Oh, no," said Rex, quickly; "you are on your way to school, are you not? I will promise not to offend again if you will permit me to accompany you."

Eunice would have preferred it otherwise, but she did not see her way to refuse so simple a request without rudeness; and in the short walk to St. John's Church, where her school-room was, Rex made himself

exceedingly entertaining, not once referring to any personal matter.

They passed around the front of the church to a gate opening from Portland Street into a yard inclosed by a high fence. A small door opened from this yard into the rear of the Sunday-school room, through which it was necessary to pass to reach Eunice's school-room. Eunice had the key of this door, and Rex took it from her and unlocked it, and then she turned to him to say good-by.

There were no houses opposite the church on Portland, and Rex's quick eye noted that there were no passers on the street as they entered the yard.

"Will you not show me your school-room?" he said persuasively. "It is early, and I promise not to bother you more than a few moments."

Eunice hesitated. It did not seem to her quite the "proper" thing to do, but she was not very sure of the proprieties, and Rex had made himself so agreeable to her through their short walk that he was already beginning to undermine her stern resolutions. He accompanied his request with such a winning smile of friendly beseeching that she had not the heart to refuse, and she walked primly before him through the big, silent room to her school-room door.

The school-room had been shut up since Friday, and was close and stuffy. Eunice went at once toward the windows to open them, but Rex quickly interposed. They were high Gothic windows, befitting a church, and it took some effort and some little time on Rex's part to open them,—an interval which Eunice em-

ployed in removing her bonnet and putting it away. The balmy morning air soon filled the room with sweetness. The windows looked toward the south and east, and the young maples bordering the pavement tempered the sunshine that came filtering through the leaves, casting cool shadows on the floor and desks.

"This is my school-room," said Eunice, as Rex turned from his task; "and, as you see, there is little to show you. But I think it a pleasant room."

"Very pleasant, indeed," answered Rex; "but I shall not know quite how it looks unless I see the teacher in her chair."

"Very well," she said; "you shall see the teacher in all the terrors of her authority, and then I shall expect you to depart at once"; and she mounted the little platform, and sat down in her chair with a little air of constraint inseparable from her when she felt herself under observation.

By the side of her chair stood a table on which were neatly arranged pens, pencils, and ink, a ruler, a globe, and a few books. Eunice rested her right arm on the table, and took the ruler in her hand, while her other hand dropped in her lap. You might have thought she was sitting for a picture of the typical teacher, such a pedagogical air had she assumed, her slim figure, rigidly erect, holding the symbol of stern authority in her hand. But it was a pretty picture, too; her gray dress fitted her slender figure perfectly and harmonized with the pale tints of her brown hair, blue-gray eyes, and delicately tinted

cheeks. It was brightened at the throat by a soft lace collar fastened with a scarlet ribbon, and from beneath the folds of the hoopless skirt peeped a tiny pointed shoe.

There was no mistaking the admiration in Rex's glance as, resting his foot on the platform and leaning one arm on a supporting knee in almost the exact attitude in which Eunice had first seen him, he brought himself nearer her and his eyes on a level with hers.

"Most dread and august pedagogue," he said gaily, "you inspire me with a mighty awe; but behold me meekly ready to receive any castigation you may inflict or any penance you may impose, if you will only show me wherein I have offended since last Monday night."

Eunice, who had smiled at the beginning of the speech, grew very rigid at its close.

"Mr. McAllister," she said, "I thought you promised not to return to that."

"I promised that I would not on my walk. I made no promises for the school-room"; and then, quickly changing his tone to a more serious one, he said: "Miss Harlowe, I wear near my heart a little flower that I have been cherishing all this week as a pledge of our friendship; and now the first time I meet you since receiving that pledge, I find you changed. There is no longer any friendliness in your manner. You try in every way to avoid me or to snub me. I think it is only right you should tell me what I have done to incur your evident displeasure."

His eyes had lost their smiling look; he was gazing

directly and earnestly into hers. Eunice turned away. She was suffering intense mortification and embarrassment, betrayed by the nervous playing with the ruler and the painful color that slowly and steadily deepened in her face. But the clenching of the small hand that lay in her lap betrayed also that she was nerving herself for some unpleasant task.

"Mr. McAllister," she said in a low tone as Rex paused for a reply, "it is mortifying to me to be compelled to express my regret and humiliation that I should have ever been led into so silly an act as to drop that rose."

"No, no," said Rex, interrupting her eagerly; "do not call it silly: it was the sweetest and most womanly of actions, and I cherish the rose as a most sacred and precious pledge of our friendship."

Eunice went on coldly:

"I am sorry you should attach any importance to it at all. Please do not consider it a pledge of friendship or anything but a worthless flower, whose dropping was the combined result of a foolish impulse and accident. And I wish to say further, Mr. McAllister, that I do not feel that I am ready to enter into any compact of friendship with you. My acquaintance with you is very brief, and although I have found it pleasant, I do not believe we have any common ground on which to base a friendship." She went on with still more effort: "We have been very differently reared. Many things that seem to you but harmless amusements shock me inexpressibly. I believe there are very few vital points on which we feel

or think or believe alike. There can be no natural or permanent growth of friendship between two people so totally unlike in every respect; I do not believe it is wise to try to force a temporary one. It is better that we should remain simply on the footing of pleasant acquaintance."

Rex had not changed his attitude, nor had his eyes left Eunice's face, and it made it all the more difficult to speak steadily under their intense gaze. He answered now in a tone as low and restrained as her own:

"I feel the force of much you have said, Miss Harlowe; I know I am not worthy of your friendship, and if you knew me better you might be still more shocked by what would seem to you my ungodly ways. But in the few days I have known you I have had more impulses toward higher and better living than I have had in years. Do you not think it a woman's mission to make the world better? Can there be no friendship between a lovely and noble woman and a man who has some longings for a nobler life? I have a mother who is as sweet and true a Christian as I am sure you are. Nothing could make her happier than to know her wayward boy had found a pure, sweet, lovely Christian friend who could persuade him to renounce the wrong and follow the right."

Eunice was much moved. She knew that this might be very specious pleading, but she could not believe it was. There was genuine feeling in his voice, and she shrank sensitively from assuming the rôle of the

Pharisee; while one sentence from her morning reading kept ringing in her ears, "Who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"

Rex waited for her answer, but while she hesitated, perplexed by conflicting emotions, there came through the open window the sound of merry voices from the pavement below. Eunice started up nervously.

"Please go, Mr. McAllister, at once," she exclaimed. "My pupils are coming. They will be here in a moment."

"I will go, Miss Harlowe, and I shall manage not to be seen by them. I would not have you annoyed for worlds," said Rex, as he drew himself erect. "But you must promise me one thing—that you will give me an opportunity to finish this conversation."

"Oh, yes, yes!" said Eunice, hardly knowing what she said in her anxiety lest her pupils should come in and surprise McAllister there.

Rex grasped the hand that lay in her lap with a quick pressure. "Good-by," he said; "you must not worry. No one shall know I have been here."

Eunice saw him disappear somewhere in the depths of the big, empty church, and then hastily drew from her table drawer a bundle of papers. When, a moment later, two of the older girls entered the schoolroom, Miss Harlowe was calmly engaged in correcting compositions.

CHAPTER XIII

A SOIRÉE MUSICALE

"THE Misses Perkins present their compliments to Miss Harlowe, and will be honored by her presence at a Soirée Musicale on Friday evening at eight o'clock.

"R. S. V. P.

"Tuesday, Sept. 15th."

Eunice's invitation was one of three left at Mrs. Charlton's by a colored boy in white gloves carrying a silver salver on which lay a multitude of tiny pink envelops that he was distributing in town and through the college.

There was added to Mrs. Charlton's invitation a more informal note, begging that she would persuade Miss Harlowe and Lucy to honor them with some songs that evening. Lucy demurred at once.

"I should be frightened to death," she asserted. "You have no idea, Eunice, what a formidable thing one of the Misses Perkins's soirées is. Miss Perkins herself announces you, just as if it were a concert, and then you are formally handed to the piano, and not a whisper is permitted while you are performing.

If any one so far forgets himself as to utter a word, Miss Caroline fixes him with a stern eye, or Miss Phœbe looks toward him (she never looks *at* anybody) and holds up a warning finger. You can imagine the painful and rigid attention. It would frighten every atom of voice right out of me."

Neither could Eunice be persuaded to go through such an ordeal as Lucy described; but finally Mrs. Charlton prevailed upon them to attempt a duet. She "would be so extremely sorry not to oblige her very old and very dear friend, Miss Perkins" was her final plea, and Lucy confided to Eunice that she believed mother was afraid not to do anything Miss Perkins asked her, she stood in such awe of her.

They had hard work to decide which it should be of the three duets which composed their combined repertoire. They settled finally on "Music and Her Sister Song" as the most dignified of the three, and spent all their spare moments until Friday in practice. Cindie, a devout lover of music, was deeply impressed, and soon catching the refrain, went about singing in her shrill soprano, "Swee—eet Mew-oo-sic, swee-eet Mew-oo-sic, Mewsic and her sis-*ter* Song, her sis-*ter* Song, her *Sis-ter Song.*" The boys thoroughly enjoyed her unconscious caricature of the style and emphasis Lucy and Eunice were trying to put into their song, but it became so annoying to the principal performers that Mrs. Charlton had to be appealed to at last to silence Cindie.

Lucy might say what she pleased about the Perkins *soirées musicales*, but they were functions held

in high esteem in Bellaire society. They were given at regular intervals during the season, and were justly considered by the Misses Perkins as most efficient aids in the polishing process to which their young ladies were subjected.

A big, old-fashioned "double" house on South Harcourt was the home of the Misses Perkins's "Seminary for Young Ladies." A broad flight of white stone steps guarded by iron railings led to the massive front door, also white, and flanked on either side by narrow side-lights, curtained in green, while a semicircular window over the door was screened with a marvelously fluted arrangement of green nun's cloth that, to my childish eyes, when I had the honor of being a day scholar at that celebrated seat of learning, was a wonderfully correct copy of the rising sun as depicted in my geography.

But the day-scholars were not admitted through that ponderous front door into the dim and stately hall beyond. Like all Bellaire houses, a little side alley with a brick archway closed by a high green door, as carefully locked at night as the front door itself, admitted to the garden and the rear premises; and it was through the alley and through a side door opening from the yard that the day-scholars found their way to the pleasant school-room.

Such delightful old gardens as those Bellaire gardens were! Such pleasant, odorous places, deep and narrow, running back often two or three hundred feet and rarely more than fifty or sixty broad. You would never guess what bowers of bloom lay behind

those plain brick walls where each house elbowed its neighbor in unbroken phalanx up and down the long blocks of the streets: gardens that rioted in bloom, with their high walls draped in roses and honeysuckles, and bordered with neatly kept beds where every flower bloomed in its season, from the early crocuses and daffodils and hyacinths to the latest fall flowers. A straight walk between neatly trimmed box hedges ran down the middle of Miss Perkins's garden until it reached the center, where it divided in two curves to make room for a circular arbor or kiosk covered with clematis and sweet yellow jessamine; and beyond the arbor it went straight on again to the clump of fruit-trees that overhung the lower wall. The grass-plots on either side were dotted with clusters of flowering shrubs, stately purple lilacs, and pink and white altheas and fragrant, creamy syringas; and on one side of the arbor was a venerable maple-tree, around whose gnarled trunk twined the trumpet-creeper, festooning the hoary branches with long wreaths of scarlet flowers.

In June these Old Bellaire gardens were a wilderness of roses: the fragrant but humble pink cabbage-rose, from which I suspect our florists have developed that rose marvel, the haughty American Beauty; their beautiful but odorless white sisters, and the deep red of the unprized Mehecca, which, for aught I know, was the forerunner of the lovely Jacqueminot. In September there were no longer any fragrant blooms; the roses bore only crimson haws, and the sweet flowers of early spring in the borders had given place to

stiff rows of heavy-headed orange and red dahlias, and scarlet spikes of salvia and lowly asters in all the shades of purple, from the lightest lavender of the ribbons on Miss Caroline's head-dress, sacred to such festal occasions as soirées, to the deep purple of those reserved for more ordinary occasions. Miss Caroline was at this moment receiving with stately bows the salutations of her guests, while she held rigidly erect in her left hand a "pineapple" bouquet of these very blossoms,—that ingenious arrangement by which flowers were divested of every particle of grace and welded into a solid pyramid which, save for color and fragrance, had as little claim to beauty as a cabbage. By Miss Caroline's side stood Miss Phœbe, and they were flanked to the right and left by a semicircle of bright-eyed girls, stately brunettes and petite blondes, in rich silks or dainty muslins, who were formally presented to each new arrival. They were most of them Southern girls, many of them sisters or cousins of the young Tomlinsonians, and carrying themselves with the haughty grace natural to the Southern belle.

These annual presentations of their young ladies to Bellaire society were always occasions of great pride to the Misses Perkins. They did not confine themselves to the college circle in their invitations: there was a goodly sprinkling of lawyers and doctors and judges, with their wives and daughters, and a few army officers, before whose brilliant uniforms the glories of the students, brave in flowered waistcoats and long-skirted coats, paled.

And never had they had such a brilliant array of beauty to present as was drawn up beneath the wide arch between the double parlors on this evening; and little did the proud Misses Perkins dream that it was the last time they should ever marshal such an array of youth and beauty in the stately parlors; that the storm brewing in the South, whose angry murmurings were audible through the wildly raging tumults of the fall elections, should burst before the spring and send those white birds fluttering in terror toward their Southern homes. Never again would their little school know the prosperous days of "before the War." In more modest quarters and with greatly diminished numbers were they destined for another decade to mold blushing beauty on the model of half a century ago, though still receiving from old Bellairians the homage without which life would have been well-nigh insupportable to them.

On a landing half-way up the broad, winding stairs Lucy and Eunice met their escorts. Neither Willie Dayton nor Rex McAllister was on duty in that capacity; somebody had got ahead of them, and Rex uttered a hasty malediction when he found that it was Mr. Rogers who had robbed him of the anticipated pleasure. On the arms of their attendants the girls descended the long flight of stairs, crossed the wide hall between double lines of young men, and went through the ordeal of the presentation. To Lucy, who had been through it often before, it was not quite so much of an ordeal as to Eunice, who felt herself growing more rigid and constrained with every successive

bow, which etiquette required should be as low and sweeping as possible, and accomplished without relinquishing the arm of her escort. It added to her discomfiture that she felt positive Rex's dark eyes were upon her, watching every movement; for she had seen him, as she entered, leaning with negligent grace against the mantel, and though she had not dared to life her eyes in his direction, she felt his keen scrutiny, and imagined a smile of half-pitying amusement. It was with heightened color she made her last and most embarrassed bow, and Mr. Rogers, divining her discomfort, sought for her at once a quiet nook in the back parlor where she might recover her composure. There they were joined a few moments later by Lucy and Willie, and, others coming up, she was soon the center of a gay circle. Just as the clock on the mantel chimed the half-hour which was the signal for the reception to end and the music to begin, Rex made his bow, and at that moment Miss Perkins's voice was heard announcing the first number on the program. Every sound was hushed, and the little circle widened out and faced the piano, placed between the windows in the front parlor.

Through the long program that followed, guiltless of the names of Beethoven or Wagner, but bristling with Thalberg and Gottschalk, prime favorites at that day, Rex stood by the side of Eunice, who shared a comfortable little sofa in the corner with Lucy. He had solicited the honor of handing her to the piano when her turn should come, and Eunice had acceded hesitatingly, not sure but that the honor rightfully belonged to Mr. Rogers as her escort.

Their duet had been placed last on the program, and for some time Eunice had been growing more and more nervous. It was not a state of mind usual with her. She had sung to much larger assemblies at the concerts at Mount Holyoke without a tremor, but there was something alarming to her in the stately ceremony Miss Perkins insisted upon, and in the exclusiveness of the audience, where every one either knew her or knew of her, and all considered themselves entitled to first rank as critics.

She was hardly conscious of her own movements when she heard their song announced by Miss Perkins with an especial flourish of compliments on the "pleasure they all felt in having with them a gifted young lady from a Northern clime, who had kindly consented to entertain them in a vocal duet, assisted by our dear young friend, Miss Lucy Charlton." Then Rex offered her his hand and led her in stately fashion through the space cleared for her to the piano, where she was joined by Lucy, who had been conducted thither in the same manner; and together they made the low and sweeping curtsey that Miss Perkins insisted upon as a preliminary ceremony, and which they had been diligently practising during the week as they practised their music. Eunice seated herself at the piano, but from the moment she struck the first note she was conscious that their duet would be a failure.

It was not nearly so bad as Eunice's exaggerated sensitiveness fancied it. There were one or two discords in the accompaniment, and Eunice sang a little flat, owing to her extreme nervousness, but more than

half of her audience probably did not detect either of these faults. To Eunice, who felt that, both as a stranger and as the new teacher who aspired also to have music-pupils, she was no doubt being subjected to the severest criticism, it was a frightful ordeal. She knew she was singing flat, and could in no way help herself; but, worse than that, her voice sounded in her ears like Cindie's shrill squeal, and the whole song seemed like a caricature, with that constant repetition of the unmusical "Music," which, as they sang it, sounded in her ears like Cindie's three-syllabled "Mew-oo-sic." She wondered how they ever could have selected such a song, and was sure everybody was either laughing or only restrained from doing so by courtesy. She would gladly have stopped in the very middle of the performance and fled from the piano, and it was only a grim determination that carried her through to the very last "*sis-ter Song.*"

Mr. Rogers was standing at a little distance from her, and his sensitive ear felt keenly the shortcomings of the music. Rex, not so musical, saw no faults in the rendering, but simply did not think it "a pretty piece." He did see, however, that Eunice was nervous, and that the pallor, which had been extreme when she sat down to the piano, had given way to a painful color. So, as soon as he had murmured the few necessary compliments, and while the applause—which was a matter of course and did not in any way reassure Eunice, though she would have been still more miserable without it—had not yet ceased, he whispered, "It is warm here; let us go out into the

garden," and Eunice was glad to escape from the blazing lights and the crowded rooms.

Like most Bellaire houses, a low French window in the back parlor led on to a veranda, and from there, by a short flight of steps, into the garden. The garden was hung with lanterns, seats and tables were placed invitingly in every cozy nook, and the young people had barely waited for the end of the program to seek its cooler air and softer lights. They were thronging the veranda, promenading up and down the long walk, or had filled the arbor and all the available seats. Rex sought a nook at the very farthest corner of the garden, where he knew there were seats under a spreading apple-tree, only to find them all occupied. He was annoyed, and showed it by an impatient exclamation; but a sudden thought struck him.

"Never mind, Miss Harlowe; if you will come with me, it is only a step to the Hetzgar garden, and I know we can find seats there."

Eunice demurred. She did not want to be again led into committing any impropriety, but Rex was eager and persistent.

"It is only three steps from here, and I assure you I would not ask you to go if it were not perfectly proper. Besides, we can go through the alley gate, and no one will ever know that we have been anywhere but in the garden." And then he bent over her and whispered, "I *must* finish the conversation that was interrupted on Monday, and it is impossible here."

Sure that she was doing what she would regret later, and yet feeling herself powerless against his impetuosity, Eunice yielded and let herself be led through the dark alleyway and into the street beyond.

It was, as Rex said, only a few steps to the Hetzgar garden. Harcourt Street here makes a sharp bend to the left and a sudden decline to the old Sulphur Springs Road, so that from a little distance the garden seemed to close the street. That rambling old garden was the joy and delight of Bellairians, crowning the summit of the hill and descending its slopes in terraces, where winding paths bordered by beds of old-fashioned flowers led to vine-covered arbors or grassy slopes where rustic seats were placed invitingly under spreading lindens and maples. The generous owner, a bachelor, had given tacit permission to the citizens to enjoy his garden freely, and it had come to be considered almost in the light of a public park.

At the gate, standing invitingly open, Eunice hesitated again. It looked dark under the trees that arched the entrance and the avenue leading from it, but Rex gave her no opportunity to change her mind. He was well acquainted with its arrangement, apparently; and leaving the main avenue immediately, he turned to the right into a little path that ran parallel to the street, and a few steps brought them to a noble old elm, under whose drooping branches was a rustic seat. A low hedge screened them perfectly from the street, and yet did not intercept the rays from a neighboring gas-lamp, which threw a fantastic

carpet of mottled light and shade over the soft, thick turf. They were so near the street that the voices of the passers-by were plainly audible, and that gave Rex an excuse for adopting a low and guarded tone, and gave him also the advantage of seeming to hold his conference on extremely confidential terms. He plunged at once into the heart of the subject.

"You have never answered my question, Miss Harlowe. Can there be no friendship between a noble woman and a man who has better impulses than the world gives him credit for, and who needs such a friendship?"

Rex's question had hardly been out of Eunice's mind since that Monday morning. Away from the influence of his soft tones and dark eyes, she could decide there was little sincerity in his pleading. She had even tried to persuade herself that it was only another of his many arts employed in an idle flirtation. She had never been quite ready to believe that, but she had come to the decision that he was not the kind of man that she was willing to call friend, and that as she had said before, there was no common ground of either character or training on which they could base a friendship. She intended to say this to him now more plainly and more firmly than she had ever done before, and a little sense of pique that he should consider her such an easy dupe added to her resolution. So, in her coldest, primmest, and what Rex would have denominated her most "Yankeeish" manner, she said all this to him.

Her tone sent the angry blood coursing through

Rex's veins. For a moment the old desire for revenge, which had almost been forgotten since the incident of the rose, returned with twofold power. He would like to humble this obstinate little Northerner. Was he, a proud and haughty South Carolinian, to confess himself foiled by a meek little Yankee? It was quite light enough for Eunice to see the flashing eye and scornful smile with which he listened to her, and, determined though she was, it half frightened and half moved her from her purpose. When she finished, Rex said quickly:

"I will not sue for your friendship any longer, Miss Harlowe. I see that it is a boon you consider me utterly unworthy to receive. It is reserved, no doubt for some pious Phi Kap who is not only more congenial, but has convinced you that he is without spot and without blemish."

It was an utterly unmanly speech, and that a momentary but fierce jealousy stung him to make it was no excuse, and Rex was thoroughly ashamed of it almost before it was uttered. There was no mistaking whom he meant. Mr. Rogers was Eunice's only Phi Kappa Sigma acquaintance, and while she shrank sensitively from the unmanly thrust, she answered with a hauteur quite equaling his own:

"If you refer to Mr. Rogers, Mr. McAllister, I admit that our tastes and views are sufficiently similar to offer no obstacle to a friendship, should either of us desire it; but I question your right to introduce any one else into this discussion, and if I am to infer that these are the manners of a Southern gentle-

man, then I am still more convinced that we have nothing in common."

Rex was in an agony of shame.

"Miss Harlowe, I beg you, I entreat you, to forgive me. I am utterly ashamed before you. You cannot be more sensible than I how unmanly, how cowardly, my speech was, and I assure you it was bitterly regretted almost before it left my lips. I feel most poignantly how unworthy I am of your friendship, and that I have given you a convincing proof of the truth of all you have said."

Rex's contrition was so genuine that Eunice was softened in a moment, and it was extremely distasteful to her to seem to be playing the part of a self-righteous Pharisee toward this self-accusing publican. She wanted to express her forgiveness freely and say something kind to him, but freedom of speech was difficult to Eunice, especially if there was to be any softness with it. It was much easier for her to utter a haughty reproof than now to express her forgiveness. There was a little embarrassment in her manner, therefore, when she said:

"Please, Mr. McAllister, do not say anything more. I can understand that you spoke hastily and regret it, and I shall try to forget that you ever made a speech that I am sure was not worthy of you; and I must have been very unhappy in my choice of words if I conveyed to you any idea that I thought you unworthy of my friendship. It was only that I thought we were unwise to enter hastily into such a compact, and I feared it would bring happiness to neither of us."

Rex leaned eagerly toward her as she finished, and spoke quickly:

"Miss Harlowe, I am not going to ask you for your friendship now, but I cannot think of that little rose that lies so near my heart, nor remember the night you flung it down to me, without making one more effort to win it. Will you be my confessor, and when I have finished my confession, if you still believe me unworthy of your friendship, you have only to say so. But if you think I need such a good, true friend as you could be to me, and you are not afraid to be that friend, will you not say that as freely?"

He waited for Eunice's answer, which came slowly:

"I will be glad to hear you, and if I can, I will be your friend."

"Thank you," said Rex. Then he was silent a moment. For once in his life he was going to be thoroughly honest and sincere, and he was taking his courage in his hand. He bent a little nearer and began to speak in a lower tone. Rapidly and skilfully he pictured the boy, the spoiled idol of a Southern home, whose word was law to a hundred slaves, but growing up at a mother's knee who taught him to pray and to love her Bible and her God. He pictured the brave, handsome father who was his boyish ideal, and whose very faults the boy, as he grew older, learned to admire and longed to imitate; and how he gradually grew away from the mother's influence, following his father to all the county races and great political gatherings, proud to be able to smoke his cigar or clink his glass with men who were old enough to know

better than to encourage a youngster in such practices,—until finally his father, who was proud of his boy and loved to have him with him, began to realize that he was rapidly coming to no good, and hustled him off to a Northern college, his own Alma Mater. And with what tears and prayers his mother had let him go! The memory of them had returned to him often in the midst of his wildest hours. Since coming to college he had done many things that he was ashamed of, but never without a protest of the conscience his mother had so carefully trained in boyhood. Never had he done what he knew would give her pain without suffering agonies of regret afterward.

He had found a good friend in Mrs. Charlton, who had not hesitated to counsel, encourage, and scold him when it was necessary; and many a time had he fled to the refuge of her kind and motherly presence from his reckless associates bent on some wild orgy. But he had not always sought to escape, and sometimes he had been himself the most reckless leader of them all.

"And when I was at home this last summer," he continued, "it almost broke my mother's heart to find that I was only growing more confirmed in my wild ways. She was not willing that I should return to college; but it was my last year, and my father was anxious that I should graduate, and I promised that I would try to break away from old habits and wild associates. Almost from the moment I first saw you I have felt that you were sent as my delivering angel, and you will understand me when I say that

I never look at you without thinking of my mother. You have inspired me with a longing for something nobler and better, and I think that with you for my friend I may attain to it. I know my own weakness and the strength of old habits; but I believe that if I could feel my wrong-doing was going to grieve you, it would be the strongest safeguard I could have. Are you willing to help me? If you knew how I loathe my past and long to cut free from it, and yet how helpless I feel in the toils I have woven for myself!"

Eunice had listened with mingled feelings. She was shocked at the picture Rex presented; for while in a vague way feeling that he was "worldly" and "ungodly," she had not fancied him as black as he had painted himself. But, like all good women, she loved a reprobate, and was flattered by the thought that she might be able to save him. And, no doubt, Rex was counting a little on that amiable weakness when he dared to draw so dark a picture. She was not so blinded, however, by the fascinations of the sinner as not to recognize that his mother ought to be a greater inspiration to him to do right than a young woman who was almost a stranger, and that where Mrs. Charlton, with her charms and her wise counsel, had failed, she could hardly hope to succeed. But the rôle of guardian angel he offered her was peculiarly tempting to Eunice's religious temperament. There was a moment of silence after he finished, while she was trying to frame a reply. Rex dropped the fan with which he had been playing all through his

long recital, while his dark eyes bent on her a look of pleading.

"Is it to be my friend?" he said in a low voice intense with feeling.

Eunice tried to answer calmly:

"I am willing and glad to be your friend, Mr. McAllister, and to help you if I can; but I have little faith that I can be of any real assistance where your mother and Mrs. Charlton have failed, and I do not believe that any reformation will be permanent that is not based on principle—love of the right and hatred of the wrong. Your truest mentors are your conscience and your Bible, and your strongest weapon of defense should be prayer."

Eunice glowed with gentle enthusiasm. Her calm eyes, lifted fearlessly to his, were filled with a tender, holy light. Rex's dark eyes drooped abashed before them. He had been honest in his confession and in his desire for her help; but he had so long been accustomed to calculate the impression he was making, that, half unconsciously to himself, he had been posing a little in his attitude of humility and repentance. He realized this now in the clear light of Eunice's earnest words, and was ashamed. When he lifted his eyes again there was deep and genuine feeling in them and in his voice as he said:

"God helping me, Eunice, I will be a better and a truer man from this hour."

"And God will help you," answered Eunice softly.

He only replied by a quick grasp of her hand, then he rose to his feet.

"I do not want to leave this spot, that will always be sacred to me; but I know that I ought not to keep you here longer."

Eunice rose quickly, too, with an exclamation of alarm. Time and place had been annihilated to her, so deeply had she been interested in Rex's confession, and a sudden terror seized her that she should find the soirée over and the guests gone. She hurried Rex along, but when they reached the alley gate, to her dismay it was locked.

"What shall I do?" she asked in a terrified whisper.

For a moment Rex was as dismayed as herself at this unlooked-for calamity, but Eunice was looking appealingly to him for help, and he answered:

"There is nothing to do but to go boldly through the hall door. I am sorry you should have this annoyance, and it is my fault for keeping you so long; but there is no help for it now. And remember," he whispered as they mounted the steps, "the bolder, the better."

The hall was filled with the bustle of departing guests, and they probably would have escaped unnoticed but that Mr. Rogers stood near the door and saw them as they entered. He cast a quick, suspicious glance at Rex, and then said coldly to Eunice:

"Miss Lucy has been looking for you, Miss Harlowe: and she desired me, if I saw you, to ask you whether you are ready to go home."

"Yes, I am quite ready," murmured Eunice, sure that she looked like the culprit she felt.

Rex spoke boldly: "Then I shall have to relinquish

you to Mr. Rogers, Miss Harlowe, and I must thank you for a very pleasant walk.'' His manner expressed nothing that the most suspicious observer could have interpreted as more than polite courtesy.

Eunice did not find Mr. Rogers an altogether agreeable companion on her way home. He was courteous, but made no effort to be especially entertaining, and the burden of the conversation fell on her. She made strenuous efforts to sustain it, but with indifferent success. She was not very well satisfied with the evening when she reviewed it alone in her room. She was still mortified over what she termed the ''failure'' of their duet, and she fancied that she had suffered in some way in Mr. Rogers's esteem by her long absence with Rex; and she liked him and respected him too much not to feel it keenly.

She was inclined to be a little bitter toward Rex because he was so constantly putting her in a false position and causing her vexatious regrets. Yet her last waking thoughts were of the look and tone that had accompanied his earnest words, ''God helping me, Eunice, I will be a better and a truer man from this hour.''

CHAPTER XIV

AN UNCONDITIONAL SURRENDER

REX had had a keen suspicion that Mr. Rogers had been responsible for the locking of the gate, and the fact that he had been apparently on watch at the door strengthened it. He confided his suspicions to Willie Dayton that evening after they had both returned to their room, and was amazed to see Willie receive his confidence with an explosion of laughter.

The laughter was so long continued that Rex's temper was fast rising, which Willie perceiving, he made an effort at soberness, and told Rex that Lucy and he had locked the gate most innocently. They had gone through it, looking for Eunice and Rex, thinking it possible they were walking up and down the pavement outside, and on their return Lucy had suggested that it ought to be locked, as she knew Miss Perkins usually kept it so in the evening, and they had turned the key without the remotest suspicion that they were locking out Eunice and Rex or causing them any annoyance.

His explanation was interrupted by so many "Ha-ha's" and "Ho-ho's" and "That 's too good" and "I reckon I 'll have to tell Miss Lucy," that Rex's

countenance gradually relaxed into a grim smile, though he threatened that if Willie knew what was good for him he would tell nobody. His threats would have had little effect, but when he added that he hoped Willie would say nothing to any one about it as it would certainly be very annoying to Miss Harlowe, Willie sobered up at once, and readily promised to keep "mum."

The fact that he had suspected Mr. Rogers unjustly combined with his new resolves for reformation to make Rex feel more kindly toward him and regard him no longer as a "pragmatical bigot." He began to have a respect for his clean, upright life, and to wish that his own had been more like it. Greatly to Mr. Rogers's astonishment, he greeted him at their next meeting with a cordial grasp of the hand; and as his manner lost entirely the superciliousness that had always marked his treatment of the Pennsylvanian, Mr. Rogers in his turn began to regard the South Carolinian with less severity. Rex, determined to make a thorough thing of his reform, had been endeavoring to cut loose from his wild associates,—a difficult matter to accomplish,—and therefore welcomed eagerly the signs of friendship in Rogers, which seemed to offer another sheet-anchor to his shifting impulses. Besides, he believed that it would please Eunice, and prove to her that he was in earnest, if she saw him cultivating friendly relations with the man he had spoken of so ungenerously, and whom she evidently held in high esteem.

To Willie Dayton and to his friends Rex's reform

was a source of great delight, chastened only by the fear that it might not last; but while they unobtrusively tried to offer him all the help possible, they avoided speaking to him on the subject. Some of his old associates had not had such delicate scruples, and had undertaken to scoff him out of what they called his "pious resolutions"; but they shrank back abashed at the lightnings of wrath they drew down upon themselves as, with flashing eyes and his most superb air, Rex bade them beware of how they interfered with the private and personal concerns of a gentleman. Indeed, he probably would not have hesitated to challenge them to a duel to the death in defense of his conscientious scruples and considered himself as acting the part of a good Christian in so doing.

There was one feature of Bellaire life which seemed to Eunice quite ideal: every pleasant evening on these warm autumn days, Dr. and Mrs. Charlton held an informal reception. It was the doctor's habit after the early tea to step out of the dining-room on to the lawn, and, with his children, enjoy the soft air, while he inspected the growing things, watching for new buds or planning some improvements in flower-garden and shrubbery. There Mrs. Charlton joined him as soon as she had superintended the washing of the silver and the china and glass, a ceremony always performed in the dining-room by Charles Cook, junior; and they were both sure to be joined later by two or three friends out for an evening stroll and dropping in to have a little chat with the doctor and his wife in their pleasant garden.

Miss Caroline and Miss Phœbe were almost invariably of this number, for in the fine weather it was this hour of the day that they selected for their constitutional, and Miss Caroline dearly loved a bout of argument with the doctor, or a dish of gossip with his radiant wife. One or two of the professors, also, were generally of the party—more often one of the bachelors, but quite frequently a married member of the faculty, with or without his wife. They strolled about the winding paths of the garden as they talked, sometimes stopping for a few minutes if the discussion grew heated, but resuming their walk with their serenity when the doctor managed, as he always did, to pour oil on the troubled waters.

As the evening grew later, they often gathered on the steps of the veranda, where, if one caught the sound of merry laughter, it was quite certain the doctor was entertaining his friends with a good story; and sometimes a Senior or Junior lingering near, waiting for half-past seven to arrive,—the earliest hour at which he might present himself as a caller on the young ladies,—tempted by the jovial sounds would pass through the gate and join the charmed circle. The little receptions broke up when gathering darkness warned them that they must seek the house. Miss Caroline always gave the signal for leaving; she felt that when darkness came she must be at home to see that her young ladies were all safely shut in with their books. It was the duty of a younger teacher to take charge of the study table, but Miss Caroline liked to see for herself that every young lady was in her place, so deeply rooted was her conviction that the

Tomlinson students were constantly plotting to entice her maidens to moonlight walks or other forbidden joys of youth. At the defection of the Misses Perkins the little circle gradually disintegrated, when, if there happened to be any young men coming in to make a call, Dr. and Mrs. Charlton stopped in the parlor a few minutes to show a proper courtesy to the young people, and then Mrs. Charlton went up-stairs with the children and the doctor sought his study.

Eunice enjoyed these informal evenings keenly. She felt as if heretofore her intellectual and social nature had been half starved, and she could hardly get enough of the bright and animated talk tossed back and forth like a glittering ball from one member of the little circle to another.

Of late there had been a larger attendance at these open-air receptions, and the talk had been graver, and sometimes excitement had run high, and it had needed all the doctor's skill to keep his guests within the bounds of moderation. The waves of fierce passion, running mountain-high in the fall of '60 over the coming elections, beat fiercely against the walls of Old Tomlinson. Most of the students were from the South, and of course intense in their Southern sympathies; some were from the border, and tinged with the views of both sections; while a few were uncompromising abolitionists. The faculty were almost as much divided as the students. They were of all creeds, although when the crucial test came they were all loyal to the old flag. The Misses Perkins were New England born, but a large part of their lives had

been spent in the South, their patronage was almost exclusively Southern, and the accident of their birth seemed but to add virulence to the intensity of their Southern sympathies.

In those days a house was often divided against itself. Naturally Mrs. Charlton's sympathies were with the home and friends of her youth, but not even his admiration and devotion to her could swerve the doctor from the clear line of duty and principle; and Mrs. Charlton, who in all small matters ruled regally in her household, could yield all the more gracefully to her husband when it came to matters of greater moment. Only in this one was her heart divided against itself, and it was through a long and bitter struggle that she learned at last to place her love and honor and loyalty undividedly on the side she had chosen when she had chosen her husband.

But she would not have been Mrs. Charlton if, while going through this struggle, she had not seemed often enthusiastically on the other side. It was the last gallant fight she was making against a submission all the more complete, finally, for her long resistance. And it would not have been Dr. Charlton if his sensitive soul had not often been wounded to the quick by her swift thrusts where, she knew so well, his love for her made his armor of truth and loyalty most vulnerable.

One Saturday evening the little company had divided itself into two coteries; in the center of one was Mrs. Charlton, her eyes flashing, her cheeks flushed, denouncing in the strongest terms John Brown

and his attempted insurrection. No words seemed intense enough to express her loathing and horror of a man who could deliberately incite slaves to an insurrection, with all its attendant horrors. It was the anniversary of John Brown's attack on Harper's Ferry, and some one mentioning that fact, it had aroused Mrs. Charlton to her denunciation. It was not so many miles away that it had been made, and some of his band, fleeing northward up the valley, had been taken near Bellaire.

"Can it be possible," she was saying, in tones vibrating with indignation, "that there could be men in the North so lost to all that is noblest and best in humanity as to uphold him in his vile attempt to let loose wild fiends upon helpless women and children?"

About her stood Professor Haywood, Professor and Mrs. Tiffin, and Miss Caroline Perkins, with Rex McAllister and Willie Dayton, who had come to escort Eunice and Lucy to choir rehearsal. Around Dr. Charlton had gathered Professor Harkness, the other bachelor of the faculty, and Professor Fieldman and his wife. Insensibly Eunice had drawn near Dr. Charlton as she saw Mrs. Charlton flash upon him a glance of superb indignation, as if on his devoted head rested all the sins of the North. Miss Phœbe hovered vaguely between the two parties, powerfully attracted by Dr. Charlton, whom she secretly but ardently worshiped, yet not quite daring to range herself opposite Miss Caroline. Mrs. Charlton's coterie loudly applauded her vehement speech, but the doctor

felt he would be disloyal if he did not try to soothe these excited feelings. He said mildly:

"There is no good man at the North who does not deprecate the horrors of negro insurrection, if he realizes them. I believe the trouble with John Brown was that he did not realize them. His soul was so filled with the evils and wickedness of slavery, he could think of nothing else. I believe him to have been an honest patriot, mistaken only in his methods."

His wife had been listening to him with head averted. She turned toward him now like a flash and hurled her words at him with ineffable scorn.

"Evils and wickedness of slavery! What do you at the North know about its evils? *I* know that the slaves are treated with all the tenderness and care of children; and yet let some ignorant, jealous, mischief-brewing abolitionist come among them to stir them to revolt, and they become fiends incarnate, and murder in cold bloood the masters who have cared for them! Do you mean to tell me, if that vile miscreant, that stirrer-up of insurrections, that murderer of women and children, had appeared among us, you would not have handed him over at once to suffer the utmost rigors of the law? Those who would aid and abet such a foul murderer are murderers themselves."

In her intense feeling she had extended her right arm, and unconsciously looked as if she were denouncing her husband. We were all abashed, and hardly knew where to look. We had always known that Mrs. Charlton was a high-spirited woman, and had liked her the better for it; but that she should break out

into such wrathful invective, and apparently against Dr. Charlton, our hero and saint, and the husband we knew she adored, we could not comprehend.

Lucy stood with drooping head and the hot color flaming in her cheeks, and little Millicent, who had been standing by her mother, listening to all that had preceded with wide-eyed interest, now stole to her father's side and took his hand as if to protect him, while she looked from him to her mother in terrified perplexity.

Dr. Charlton himself had, in the beginning of her speech, watched her with a troubled expression, and as she grew more vehement dropped his eyes in pained embarrassment. As she uttered the last sentence, her arm extended toward him, her head thrown back, her eyes flashing, her whole figure breathing magnificent denunciation, he raised his eyes quickly and looked straight into hers. There was trouble and pain in his glance, but there was fire also, such as we had never seen in those blue eyes.

"Millicent!" he said.

His tone was not raised, but there was such ringing command in it that we were all electrified. As for Mrs. Charlton, we could see self-consciousness returning in her softening glance and slowly sinking arm. The doctor held her for a moment as if fascinated by his steady look; then swiftly the color receded from her face, leaving her deadly pale. She sprang forward with a low cry—"Oh, Robert!"—and seized Dr. Charlton's hand, looking up into his face with piteous repentance in her imploring eyes.

"Can you forgive me? I never meant it," she whispered.

We saw the fire in the doctor's blue eyes quenched in a sudden mist. He lifted her hand to his lips with courtly old-world grace, and then drew it through his arm and held it there, while Millie stole round to her mother's side, and clung to her dress, her face wreathed in happy smiles.

We had all been so intensely interested in the little drama that we had forgotten to be embarrassed; but as Mrs Charlton turned toward us, and we saw her face rosy as a girl's, her drooping figure and downcast eyes, we began to realize that to the principal actors any spectators, even those with the kindliest interest, would seem *de trop*.

But the doctor, with his usual tact, relieved our fast-rising discomfort. He said with his genial smile:

"The war is over, friends. The South and the North are reunited. Let us take it as a happy omen that nothing more serious than a difference of opinion will ever disturb the Union."

And Mrs. Charlton, lifting her head and looking at us bravely but with shining eyes, added:

"And please, dear friends, forget that I was ever guilty of making 'a scene.' It is all because I am such a hot-headed Southerner. But I am not a Southerner any more. I am a *United-Stateser.*" And then looking up at the doctor with a radiant smile: "I love the North, and I am sorry they ever caught John Brown."

After that there were a few minutes of unusually

animated conversation, everybody trying to talk as lightly and carelessly as possible, and then the little company broke up,—Miss Caroline, as usual, going first, and saying in her most punctilious fashion, "Good night, Dr. Charlton. Good night, Mrs. Charlton. We have had a delightful evening." And then a sudden remembrance seemed to strike her: "That is —ah—*most* interesting, I am sure."

But it was Professor Harkness who surprised the doctor and his wife. He lingered until after the other guests had taken their leave, and then said with a pompous gallantry that would have been laughable only that it was accompanied with such genuine feeling, "Will you permit me, madam, to express my admiration and respect"; and awkwardly bending his huge head, for probably the first and only time in his life he lifted a lady's hand to his lips.

Eunice and Rex, Lucy and Willie, had gone to choir rehearsal, and for over an hour Mrs. Charlton was busy with the younger children, looking after their Saturday-night baths and seeing them safely into bed. There were no studies on Saturday evening, and George Edgar and Henry Sidney were playing a quiet and amicable game of chess. There were times when Mrs. Charlton appreciated the game—when it could keep her noisy boys still and out of all mischief for an hour or two. Seeing them wholly engrossed now, and the little ones all asleep, she stole softly away to the doctor's study. Dr. Charlton was bent over his big table, littered with books and papers, writing dili-

gently, and she came in so quietly that he did not hear her until she laid her hand softly on his shoulder. Then he whirled around quickly in his revolving chair; but before he had time to speak she said hastily and with a quivering lip:

"Were you dreadfully ashamed of me this evening, dear? Oh, will I *ever* learn to govern my temper?"

He looked up at her with an adoring gaze, and putting his arms around her slender waist, drew her down to a seat upon his knee.

"I think it was the proudest, happiest moment of my life, my love, when you proved to my friends that my wife is not more beautiful and high-spirited than she is noble and loving."

CHAPTER XV

OF THE SAME OPINION

EUNICE and Rex walked silently down Lovers' Lane, their thoughts on the same subject, but Eunice at least not caring to give them utterance. Suddenly Rex spoke:

"Was n't she splendid! I can hardly tell whether I liked her most in her scornful or in her repentant mood, she was so grand in one and so lovable in the other. I have always thought her the most delightful woman in the world, and now I think she is adorable. What a happy man Dr. Charlton must be to possess the heart of such a superb creature! He is one of the best of men, but no man can be worthy of such a woman's love!"

Rex spoke with glowing enthusiasm and with the extravagance natural to him; but his admiration was sincere,—there was no mistaking that,—and Eunice marveled.

She had been much troubled for Mrs. Charlton. She also admired her greatly, but the impetuous little scene through which they had just passed was almost incomprehensible to her colder nature. There had been a tinge of the theatrical about it to her, and

her sympathies had been all with Dr. Charlton, while she had felt only the keenest mortification for Mrs. Charlton. She had, indeed, admired her for the quick repentance she had shown, but she felt so sure that she must have lost caste with all those people whom she was accustomed to rule regally that her admiration was much tinged with pity. To find that she had gained instead of losing, with Rex at least, and probably with them all, was both a relief and an annoyance. It was a relief because she loved and admired Mrs. Charlton, but inbred instinct and life-long training had taught her that all display of emotion in public was at least in questionable taste; and it was distinctly annoying to find that here one not only did not suffer the proper penalty for such a sin against good taste, but seemed to gain by it a further apotheosis.

It is barely possible, too, that Eunice's annoyance was not entirely impersonal. In the scene through which they had just passed there had been in the background of her consciousness a comfortable sense that a calm and self-controlled woman, to whom such a display of emotion would be impossible, must appear to immense advantage in the eyes of an interested witness. This little fabric of self-esteem that she had so unconsciously built up, Rex's speech rudely shattered, and she did not find the act of demolition a pleasant one.

She often wondered why she wished to stand so well in the estimation of Rex McAllister. She had been sure, almost from the beginning of their acquain-

tance, that he was not the kind of man who could ever be to her—she put it blushingly—more than a pleasant friend. There were certain qualities she demanded in a man that seemed to be preëminently absent in Rex. Chief among them was moral strength. Thorough respect and admiration for a man's moral nature must with her, she felt sure, precede any softer emotion. Rex had apparently made a thorough reformation, or was making it; and while his appeals to her for help touched her and she was more than willing to extend a helping hand toward him, she assured herself, with a touch of scorn when some occasional word or look of his seemed to ask for something more than mere friendliness, that she would never be a moral crutch for the man she loved.

Yet she had to confess that there was no one to whose opinion she was so supremely sensitive. She trembled lest she should ever appear to him less of an angel of light than he had called her in the Hetzgar garden. The fear gave her more of constraint with him than with any one else, and in hours of morbid self-dissection, which were not infrequent with Eunice, she accused herself of posing before him, mentally and morally.

That he should so ardently admire in Mrs. Charlton the very characteristics which seemed to Eunice least admirable, and which she knew were impossible to herself, caused her a keen thrill of mortified vanity. She could perceive now that of course an impulsive, frank, and generous nature like Mrs. Charlton's was the very kind to appeal most powerfully to a bold,

impetuous, hot-headed Southerner, and that he could never feel more than a passing attraction to a temperament so utterly antipodal as her own; and the perception did not give her the pleasure that she felt it ought.

All these shades of feeling tinged a little Eunice's formal response to Rex's panegyric:

"I admire Mrs. Charlton extremely," she said, "and love her very much. No mother could have been kinder and more tender than she has been to me since I have been in her house; but I confess the scene through which we have just passed was very painful to me, and I am not sure I admire all of Mrs. Charlton's part in it. What I did admire most thoroughly was the perfect self-control Dr. Charlton exhibited, and the masterful way in which he brought Mrs. Charlton to a consciousness of the fact that she had gone too far. There is nothing so fine as moral sublimity! And there was something of it in Dr. Charlton's look and tone when he said, 'Millicent!' "

It was Rex's turn now to feel nettled, but he conceded at once:

"Oh, yes; the doctor was fine. He quite thrilled me." And then he added a little bitterly, "Although there is no moral sublimity about me,—hardly moral mediocrity, I fear you think,—I can appreciate it in others, and I quite agree with you that there is nothing so fine or so worthy of admiration in a man."

The touch of bitterness in Rex's speech was rather pleasing than otherwise to Eunice, but she had no special answer to make, and they turned to other

topics. But for some reason conversation languished. They neither of them seemed inclined to talk, and Rex particularly was fast lapsing into one of the moods Eunice had noticed in him frequently of late; she was never quite sure whether they were tinged with sullenness or melancholy, but in either case they made him silent and abstracted.

Choir rehearsal had been held in the church for the last few weeks, because the weather was still pleasant enough to require no special heating of the edifice, and it saved the trouble of conveying all the books and music to the private house where the rehearsal might be held, and then getting them back again in time for service the next morning. It was not quite such a pleasant social arrangement, and the young folks would be rather glad when the cold weather should drive them back to the cozy parlors again.

Rex escorted Eunice to the choir-gallery, and then betook himself to the lower part of the house, where, seeking a cushioned pew (they were not all cushioned —only those belonging to the faculty and a few of the wealthier families), he threw himself in a half-reclining attitude on the seat and gave himself up to a moody reverie. There was no gas lighted, except in the choir, and the twilight gloom in this part of the church was particularly favorable to that pastime. From his position, with his head resting on the high center railing that divided the pews, he could see Eunice very distinctly, and even watch the changing expression of her face, thrown into strong relief by a blazing gas-jet beside her. He him-

self was invisible or nearly so,—only an indistinct blur, if one shaded his eyes in the choir, revealing his location.

His mood was more one of irritability than melancholy. He was almost getting tired of his reform attitude; he began to think it did n't pay. Some of the boys of his fraternity were going off on an especial lark that very night, and had besought him to join them, and he half wished now that he had not held out so firmly against them. He had had a note from Miss Lydia, too, inviting him to a card-party at her house for that evening, and he had sent regrets, pleading a previous engagement. He had not seen Miss Lydia for several weeks. He knew that the sudden ceasing of his attentions must have at least aroused her curiosity—perhaps, he thought half regretfully, given her some pain.

In declining both these offers of amusement for the evening, he had felt more than compensated in the thought of the walk to and from rehearsal with Eunice; but somehow he had not altogether enjoyed the walk as he had expected. There was certainly something antagonistic in their natures. He had felt it this evening; he believed he had half felt it once or twice before. It was not that she was so good; he liked goodness in a woman, and he was trying very hard to be "good" himself now,—but it was that she expected too much of a man; nothing would ever satisfy her, but some saint like Dr. Charlton. Life with such a woman, he believed, would be a constant strain; there would be no rest, no moral undress,

no lounging in dressing-gown and slippers, but always, morally speaking, arrayed in shiniest black broadcloth, high collars, and tight boots. He was inclined to think there was more real, every-day comfort in a girl like Lydia McNair, who did not require you to live up to some high ideal, and was quite willing to allow you a moderate indulgence in your small vices so long as they were gentlemanly ones.

At this point in his reverie he saw Mr. Rogers turn to Eunice and say something, and as she looked up at him to reply it seemed to Rex that there was a wonderful sweetness in her smile that for the moment quite transfigured her. He saw it with quick pain. Could it be possible she loved Rogers? She never smiled so sweetly and so frankly on him. He had often noticed and been a little annoyed by her constrained way of smiling. Of course Rogers was the very man for such a woman as Eunice. He could see it, now that his old dislike of him had given place to friendliness. He wondered he had not thought of it before. Yes, Rogers came as near being morally grand and morally strong as any young man he knew. Well, was he not willing? He had never quite decided in his own mind that Eunice was the kind of woman he wanted for a wife, though the attraction she had had for him had been greater than any woman had ever had before. He stopped at this point to think it out, and then he suddenly sat erect, and bringing one clenched hand down violently but noiselessly on the cushioned seat, he said through his set teeth:

"No, I am *not* willing!"

The words had actually passed his lips, and at the sound he smiled at his own vehemence, and then congratulated himself that there was no one to hear them.

To his astonishment, a woman's voice just behind him said:

"Not willing to do what, Mr. McAllister?"

He sprang to his feet and turned to meet Lydia McNair. His eyes had been so steadfastly fixed on the brightly lighted gallery, and one illuminated face there, that it had prevented his seeing her entrance, and the choir, singing with full voice and great energy the triumphant pæan, "On cherubim and seraphim full royally he rode," had effectually drowned the sound of approaching footsteps. Miss Lydia, being extremely High-church, and a little bigoted withal, was the last person he would have expected to see at a Presbyterian choir rehearsal. The card-party to which he had been invited occurred to him also, and he could not understand how Miss Lydia could be absent from it; but he had such entire faith in her always doing the unaccountable thing that he was not quite free from a suspicion that she had come to compel his attendance at it.

Miss Lydia said in answer to his expression of surprise at meeting her there:

"Your defection spoiled our card-party, and it was such a beautiful evening Lieutenant Watson proposed a walk. We heard the music as we passed the church, and stepped in to listen to it. I thought I recognized you, though I was not absolutely sure, it was so dark; and I told the lieutenant I was coming to talk to

you, and he could go up-stairs and listen to the music and visit with the young ladies, and I would send for him when I was ready to go."

Rex knew Miss Lydia was quite capable of giving one cavalier a furlough when she felt like talking to another. He glanced up at the gallery and saw the lieutenant in a back seat patiently listening to the singing and not looking particularly happy. He felt sorry for him, and also felt rather uncomfortable for himself.

"I 'm in for it now," he thought; and he did not doubt for a moment that Miss Lydia intended to call him to account for his desertion of her. His conscience told him that his devotion had been too marked and too distinctly expressed not to give her a right to demand an explanation. It was with some embarrassment, therefore, that he asked her to sit down, and seated himself in the pew in front of her, where he could lean on the back and be comfortably *vis-à-vis*.

He expected her to plunge at once into the subject, for Miss Lydia was not given to using gloves in handling a delicate question; but, to his relief, she did not touch upon any personal topic, but entered into a lively discussion of several subjects of mutual interest, until he found himself enjoying her frank comments and keen repartee with quite the old relish. His fears were fast being lulled when she suddenly turned to him and said in a low tone and with an entirely different manner:

"Mr. McAllister, I hope you are not flirting with the little school-ma'am."

Rex had used the epithet "little school-ma'am" quite freely himself in the beginning of his acquaintance with Eunice, but it struck harshly on his ears now. Neither did he like the term "flirting" as applied to his relations with her. So he said quite stiffly: "Certainly not, Miss Lydia," and then, with an effort at lightness, "Did you ever know me to be guilty of flirting with any one?"

"Yes, certainly," said Miss Lydia, quickly; "but there has been some excuse for you when you indulged in it with those who were supposed to be quite able to protect themselves and were not principled against the pastime. You know it is different with Miss Harlowe. She is a sweet, good, true little woman—and lovely, I think. I am quite taken with her. But she is perfectly unsophisticated, and is the kind of woman that I should suppose would appeal to a man's best nature to protect her from himself. I have been thinking about her and worrying about her for weeks. Of course I have known why you have deserted your old friends, and at last I made up my mind I would see you and make an appeal to you in her behalf."

She had spoken rapidly, and Rex was bewildered by her accusation and by the genuine feeling in her tones. Still he thought it was hardly a matter Miss Lydia had a right to concern herself with, and he said in his coldest way—and it could be quite freezing when he chose:

"You do me great honor, Miss Lydia, when you suggest that I am able to disturb the peace of mind

of any young lady. I shall begin to consider myself quite a dangerous fellow."

There was a moment of silence before Miss Lydia answered in a voice that trembled in spite of herself:

"You *are* a dangerous fellow, Rex McAllister, and you know it."

There was a time when Rex might have secretly rejoiced at this evidence of his power, and would probably have taken advantage of it by responding with some tender nonsense. Now he was shocked to find that there seemed to be more seriousness in Miss Lydia's feeling toward him than he had dreamed, and it kept him silent for a few moments. When he spoke again, his coldness and his flippancy were both gone, and he said earnestly:

"Miss Lydia, I am afraid I deserve your poor opinion of me. I have not always shown myself to you as the honest and honorable gentleman I should like to be and should like you to think me. Shall we let bygones be bygones and begin all over again? I should like to have a chance to prove myself a friend you could thoroughly respect and trust."

He waited so long for the reply that he began to be troubled. Could it be possible she was crying? It was too dark to see, but he fancied he distinguished suspicious little movements and sounds. Miss Lydia in tears! It was inconceivable, and the thought filled him with amazement as much as pity, and almost with more embarrassment than either. What should he do?

But Miss Lydia did not leave him long in perplexity. With a briskness of tone and a lightness of man-

ner that the occasion hardly seemed to demand, she answered:

"I have always liked you very well as you were, Mr. McAllister, but I shall not object to a revised edition of our friendship if you desire it,—especially since I hope your new attitude argues well for the little school-mistress."

Rex was irritated by her flippancy, and he replied with an approach to severity:

"You need not fear for Miss Harlowe; if either of us suffers in the affections through our acquaintance, it will not be she."

There was another perceptible pause on Miss Lydia's part, and then she said softly and with a sweetness that surprised Rex:

"I am quite sure of that, Mr. McAllister. And now, would you mind calling the lieutenant? I must be going."

Rex was certain once more that Miss Lydia had been strongly moved, and he believed he understood why. It was because she had recognized the finality in what he had said: the end of all their old relations. It filled him with the keenest regret and tenderest sympathy, but he could express neither without still further wounding her.

He looked up at the gallery and found a little stir and commotion there; rehearsal was over and the choir were about to go home. Rex's quick wits took in the awkwardness of the situation. If, as he believed, there were traces of tears in Miss Lydia's eyes, it would greatly embarrass her to meet the members of

the choir in the brightly lighted vestibule. With quick decision he called up to Lieutenant Watson:

"Lieutenant, will you bring Miss Harlowe down-stairs? We will meet you at the outside door."

Then to Miss Lydia: "Come, we must be quick if we would get down ahead of them."

He drew her hand through his arm, and hurried her through the dark church. In the bright vestibule he would not even glance at her lest he might see the traces of her tears, but, hearing the descending voices, hurried her down the steps, and they were outside in the dark when the others met them.

There was the usual noisy interchange of greetings and farewells on the pavement, in which Miss Lydia bore her part gaily; and then Rex said, releasing her arm and taking her hand:

"Good-night, Miss Lydia; I hope you have enjoyed the music so much that you will come to our rehearsal again sometime."

And she answered: "Thank you, I have enjoyed it extremely; perhaps I will, if Lieutenant Watson will bring me." But both of them knew she never would.

Naturally enough, it had seemed a little strange to Eunice that Lieutenant Watson should sit up-stairs and leave Rex and Miss Lydia to a *tête-à-tête,* and then that Rex should not at least have met her at the foot of the gallery stairs, instead of waiting for her with Miss Lydia outside. She did not understand it, and there was just a little shade more of coldness and reserve in her manner as they walked home.

Rex hardly noticed it, he was so full of his own

thoughts, so sorry for Miss Lydia, but so glad to have had this understanding with her and to feel that it was all over with and that he was free from any entanglement there, if there had ever been any. Then he was happy in the mere feeling of that little hand on his arm. There had come to him a kind of revelation of his own heart, and with it a settled determination, when he had said audibly, "No, I am *not* willing," that filled him with a feeling of strength and happiness. So he did not notice that Eunice was a little more constrained and a little colder than usual.

They had returned to the topic of the Southern difficulties, and he had been saying that his last letter from home was full of forebodings. His father thought there was trouble ahead. He believed that if the Republicans won in the next election, there would be war; the South would never stand an abolitionist President. The feeling was at fever-heat in South Carolina, and he was glad Rex was out of it. He hoped it would all quiet down, but he was sometimes afraid the South would do something rash. Rex added that his father would deprecate anything rash; but whatever his State did or the South did, he would stand by it, for he was heart and soul a Southerner.

The Iron Gate had just clanged behind them, and they were entering Lovers' Lane. Rex held Eunice back a little.

"You are not in a hurry, are you? I want to ask you something—about Mrs. Charlton," he added quickly, noting at once the slight signs of panic in

Eunice. "You know she was born and bred a Southern woman. Do you think it was quite right in her to give up her views; to say, 'I am no longer a Southerner'; to say in effect, though not in words, 'I am whatever my husband is'?"

Eunice thought a moment before she answered, and then she spoke slowly:

"Yes, I think she was right. When a woman marries she leaves father and mother—all—for her husband; and she should give up everything that could create dissension between them. Of course I do not mean that she should yield any question of right or conscience; but when it is a matter where two people might hold different views, and both be right, I believe she should give up hers."

When Eunice spoke she thought Rex would disagree with her and probably maintain vehemently that, born and bred a Southerner, it would be traitorous to yield her convictions. To her surprise, he answered quickly:

"Thank you; I agree with you perfectly. I think a man's first duty is to the land of his birth, be he born in the North or in the South, but I believe that a woman's country should be her husband's."

Nor did she understand the slight, involuntary pressure of her arm as he spoke, and the glad ring in his voice.

CHAPTER XVI

A SAD GOOD-BY

REX had stated the contents of his father's letter very mildly to Eunice, and he was a little afraid he had betrayed a political confidence in saying as much as he had. What his father had really said was: "Secession is bound to come. South Carolina, at least, is eager for it, and will welcome the pretext that the election of Lincoln will give her. There are some of us who will regret it, but we are in a hopeless minority. Our leaders say, when we express the belief that such a step will result in war, 'The North will never fight; or, if she shows fight, we will thrash her so quickly she will never know what has happened!' For myself, I am not so sanguine, and I am sometimes full of dark forebodings. But I am glad you are out of the turmoil, and I want you to stay there, *no matter what happens,* until I send for you. Tell Willie Dayton his father says he must stay also."

Rex read the letter to Willie, of course. "Stay," said Willie; "if my State secedes! *No,* sir; I will have you understand, if there is to be war or trouble of any kind, I want to be in it, and nothing shall keep me here."

That election of '60, and the stormy days that preceded and followed it, are too much a matter of history to need any recalling. The election had taken place, and there was now no longer any doubt about Carolina's seceding. The excitement among the students was intense. Most of them, like Rex, had received instructions to stay in Bellaire until sent for; but most of them, like Willie Dayton, were secretly making preparations to leave the moment the news of the actual secession of their several States should reach them.

Poor Willie! His heart was greatly torn between what he called his patriotism, which drew him imperatively home to share the fortunes of his State, and his boyish passion for Lucy Charlton, which made his heart faint within him at the thought of leaving her. It made it all the harder that he had never yet had courage to declare his love; nor did he feel at all sure how Lucy would receive his declaration, if he should ever dare to make it. Whether from indifference or coyness, it was very seldom indeed that she showed him any special mark of favor. But he had fully made up his mind that before he went away he should, in the language of the day, "address" Miss Lucy, let the result be what it would.

In the meantime he had been untiring in his efforts to raise the "sinews of war." His father had purposely sent him no money, lest he should be tempted to use it in coming home. His funds were all in the hands of his patron, Dr. Charlton, who had received instructions from Mr. Dayton on no account

to let Willie have more than was absolutely necessary to pay his running expenses. His friends, all intent upon the same scheme as himself, and most of them for the same reason kept on short allowance, had no money to lend him. Rex might have helped him, but he had promised Mr. Dayton to do everything in his power to keep his boy in Bellaire, and Willie would not ask him for help lest he might tempt him to break his word.

But there was one last resource: Willie went to "Old Sykes," the dealer in second-hand furniture, largely patronized by the poorer students in fitting out their rooms, and often by the wealthier ones when delayed remittances made them temporarily hard up and they were quite willing to dispose of some article of furniture to provide them with the necessary funds for a lark with the boys, or perhaps to buy tickets for some concert or lecture to which they desired to invite the young lady who at that moment reigned supreme in their affections. Of course Old Sykes knew that when the money from home arrived the furniture would probably be bought back, and it was his part to see that the owners got it at a sufficiently advanced rate.

He knew what Willie was after the moment he entered the small, dusty, disorderly shop, crowded with furniture of all ages and every degree; but he only greeted him with a curt "Howdy" while he went on piling wash-stands on bureaus and chairs on top of both, with the evident intention of making more floor space in his crowded domain.

"Sykes," said Willie, with an attempt at being off-hand and business-like, "I have a proposition to make you, but you must pledge yourself to absolute secrecy before I divulge."

Sykes smiled grimly. He had already been pledged to "absolute secrecy" six times that morning, and hence the clearing of his floor space; but he readily gave the pledge. And then Willie told him he wanted him to come up and have a look at some furniture and make him an offer on it. Sykes stopped his work long enough to utter another curt interrogatory:

"Now?"

"Yes, right away, please," said Willie; and slowly investing himself in the coat and waistcoat he had discarded for his work, and putting a battered slouch-hat on his head, Old Sykes declared himself ready to accompany Willie.

There was not much of the furniture Willie could sell, for more than half of it belonged to Rex; but his bed with its furnishings, his rocker and book-case, and a small desk were his own. Old Sykes was a shrewd fellow. He kept up a low, aggravating whistle throughout the inspection, shaking his head over every scratch or loose screw, and his whole manner was so thoroughly disparaging that Willie was almost prepared for the extremely low sum that he named as his "outside figure." To Willie's indignant remonstrance he answered coolly:

"All right; I reckon I 'm loadin' myself up too heavy, anyway. I 'm taking just as good every day at less money; I am only doing it to oblige you fellers.

And I reckon I 'm a fool for my pains," he added as he saw Willie hesitating. "Times is mighty onsartin. Should n't wonder if the old college 'd bu'st up, you fellers is leavin' in such a hurry; and I 'll have all this stuff on my hands and nary a student to sell to."

He did not believe his own doleful prediction; he expected to sell it all back to the owners next September for three times what he had given for it, and he could not forbear mentally licking his chops at the fine speculation he was making. But he was a better prophet than he knew. Old Tomlinson did not quite break up, but it was a hard struggle for life for the next four years. Her Southern boys never came back to her, and those who came to take their places from Maryland and Pennsylvania were not only few in number but struggling for an education against all the financial discouragements of war-times, and doing without most things that the Southerners had considered absolute necessities; so that at the end of the war Old Sykes found himself still the possessor of a large part of the property acquired in those December days, and his fine speculations had left him a poorer and a sadder, though no doubt a wiser man.

"Very well, Mr. Sykes," said Willie, with dignity, "I will accept your offer, and now will you have the kindness to make an estimate on my books?"

Still the sum fell far short of Willie's necessities, and to the books he added all his summer wardrobe, and as much of his winter as he dared part with,

before he secured the amount he considered absolutely necessary to furnish him with the means of flight.

It was Friday morning, December 21, that the bulletin-board in front of the Mansion House announced to a crowd of excited students and citizens the accomplished fact of South Carolina's secession. They were prepared for it, of course: for the Baltimore and Philadelphia dailies had kept them fully informed of the progress of the convention in session at Charleston. It was the last day of the college term preceding the Christmas holidays, which in those days lasted four weeks. Students from the far South were many of them accustomed to spend those four weeks in Bellaire or in visiting college friends who lived near; but even those who had been in the habit of going home had very generally received instructions not to come at this time. That they were not all going to heed this prohibition, Mr. Sykes, standing on the outskirts of the crowd and smiling grimly as he saw half a dozen South Carolinians slipping quietly away and hurrying toward the campus, very well knew.

Willie Dayton felt that his hour had come! But one thing he had resolved on: he would not leave Bellaire until he had spoken to Lucy. He knew it would hardly be possible for him to see her before Saturday night, when he had an engagement with her for choir rehearsal; he would speak to her then, and if she would not accept him he would start for home on Monday morning.

Lovers' vows should always be breathed beneath the soft skies of May or June, and amid the fragrance

of apple-blossoms or roses. But since that was denied to Willie, the kindly fates made the best amends possible by sending a drizzling rain all Friday night, which froze as it fell and turned the old campus into a fairy world of shimmering beauty under the white radiance of the full moon. On that Saturday night Lucy was bewitching. The roses in her cheeks took a deeper tint from the frosty air, her round, white chin nestled cozily in her gray-squirrel tippet, and a "turban" of crimson velvet with a drooping white plume rested jauntily on her golden curls.

Willie had had but little to say until they had entered the campus and turned, as usual, into Lovers' Lane.

"Oh, is n't it beautiful?" exclaimed Lucy, ecstatically, looking up into the arch of fretted crystal above them, with its millions of glittering spear-points flashing and gleaming as the branches swayed gently. Willie did not look up. He looked straight down into her eyes.

"Yes," he said; "beautiful!" And Lucy, catching his glance, blushed and looked down. Willie made a desperate plunge:

"I am going away in a day or two, Cousin Lucy." Her start of surprise and her soft, regretful "Oh!" encouraged him. He bent his head toward her and went on rapidly:

"I *must* go. My country calls me, but I leave my heart behind me. Lucy, if I could be sure that you loved me, that some day I could come back and win

you for my wife, I would go away happy even if I knew I was going straight into war."

He had tried to take her hand as he made his boyish speech, but she had swiftly withdrawn it from his arm, and now stood looking up at him proudly.

"Do you mean to say, Cousin Willie, you are going back to South Carolina, and if there should be war, you will fight against your country?"

Her tone struck coldly to Willie's heart, but he answered steadily and proudly:

"Yes, I am going home; but if I fight it will be *for* my country. My State, my native land, is my country."

Lucy's blue eyes flashed and her little figure was drawn up to its full height as she answered scornfully:

"Then, sir, you will be a traitor! You *are* a traitor, and I will have nothing more to do with you!" She turned as she spoke and started homeward.

Willie stood as if petrified a moment, and then he followed her with a quick cry:

"Lucy, stop! Listen to me, please."

Her soft heart could not resist the pain in his voice, and she stopped and turned slowly toward him.

"Lucy," he said, impetuously seizing her hand, and holding it in spite of her struggles, "you are the love of my life! I would gladly shed my heart's blood for you at this moment; but not even *you* must call me *traitor*. It is right that I should go with my State and fight for her if need be,—just as, if you were a man, it would be right for you to fight

for Pennsylvania,—and I want you to take back that word."

Lucy hesitated a moment, and then she softened.

"Perhaps I was wrong, Cousin Willie, to call you a traitor; but oh, *you* are wrong, too. South Carolina is not your country, nor Pennsylvania mine, but the United States. Do not go home now. Wait until this excitement is over. Perhaps after a while you will feel differently."

"Lucy," he said, pressing the little hand he held so hard that she winced with pain, "it is heaven to have you ask me to stay, for I hope it is because you love me a little, and God knows I would do anything in the world for you that I could. But I *must* go, Lucy. Will you tell me that you love me before I go? I could almost be happy, even away from you, if I could be sure of that."

But Lucy's softened mood had passed, and a saucy, teasing one had come in its place.

"No, sir," she said; "I do not love you, even a little. I have always liked you, and I used to think you were very nice; but I am not sure I think that any more. And please, sir, let go my hand; you are hurting me."

Willie relaxed his pressure a little, but still held the hand. "Lucy," he said, and his voice was husky with his effort to control it, "do not trifle with me. I am terribly in earnest. Answer me. Will you marry me some day, when this trouble is all over and I come back?"

He was so stern that he frightened Lucy, but she

answered petulantly, "No, no; I will never marry a—a South Carolinian who fights for his State!"

Willie turned pale and slowly dropped her hand. They walked toward the house, neither of them speaking until they were at the foot of the steps. There he stopped and said gravely, "Will you let me go to church with you to-morrow night, Cousin Lucy? It may be the last time I shall ever see you. I leave early Monday morning."

Lucy answered shyly, "Yes." In this new mood of calm repression, she hardly knew the boy that she had been accustomed to treat a little condescendingly. Heretofore, though two or three years younger than Willie, she had always had an elder-sisterly feeling toward him; now he seemed suddenly to have sprung into manhood, and she felt very young indeed.

"And you will not forget the Christmas present you promised me?" he went on. "You will give it to me, please, to-morrow night?"

Lucy had not forgotten it. It was lying at that moment in her bureau drawer, neatly done up in white tissue-paper tied with a blue ribbon: an ambrotype in a pretty case, and beautifully colored, Lucy thought; the blue eyes very blue, the pink cheeks very pink, and the golden curls a bright yellow. She promised she would bring it to him, and then he added with a little hesitation:

"I do not like to ask you to keep any secrets from your father and mother, but you know it is essential that they should not know that I am going away."

And Lucy, hardly knowing whether she was doing wrong or not, promised to keep his secret.

In the quiet of her own room she shed a few tears, mingled with some smiles and blushes; she was sorry indeed to have Willie go away, and he was her first lover: not at all her ideal, which was of some one grand and stern, tall and dark and cold, not boyish and sunny-natured, with brown curls and smiling blue eyes. But, after all, there was a little sense of shy elation in the fact of having a genuine lover. "And, besides," she confessed to herself, "I really do like Cousin Willie very much."

The next day was not a comfortable one for Lucy. Sitting in the choir at the morning and the afternoon service, with Willie just a little in the rear on the other side, she was conscious of his sad eyes often resting on her. He walked home with her from both services, for he kept saying to himself, "It is the last time," and though the pleasure was a painful one, he would not have missed it.

Except for a little reference once or twice to "last times," and how often they would be in his thoughts, he did not refer to his going away. But he was so subdued and quiet that Lucy found difficult all her efforts to be natural and bright.

In the evening he did not return to the conversation of the night before until they had arrived at the little gate at the end of Lovers' Lane on their way home. Lucy, with her little package safely stowed away in her pocket, was beginning to think he was not going to ask her for it, and was fluctuating between proudly

declaring to herself that he should not have it unless he asked, and weakly trying to screw her courage to the point of offering it to him. At the gate he stopped.

"Have you my Christmas present for me, Lucy?" he asked timidly.

Pockets were not hard to find in those days. She slipped her hand quickly into hers, and laid the little package in his hand. He undid it carefully, folding the paper and the blue ribbon and putting them in his pocket before he opened the case. Then letting a ray of moonlight fall upon it, he looked at it a long, long time, apparently forgetting Lucy's presence, and at last raising it passionately to his lips. Lucy did not see that; she had turned restlessly away: but it would have made no difference to Willie if she had. Then he said—again gently:

"All my requests are last requests now, Cousin Lucy; and I do not believe you will refuse them. Will you give me one tiny curl to put in the case with your picture?"

Lucy's head was still turned away, but Willie heard her soft "Yes" and lifted the curl that lay next her face. It was soft and warm from its nestling-place in her neck, and he held it in his hand a moment and then lifted it to his lips before he cut off a tiny spiral and, laying it in the case, put it away in an inner pocket. When he spoke again it was diffidently.

"Cousin Lucy," he said, "if you do not mind going up to the house alone, I will say good-by to you here."

Lucy turned toward him. She felt she must say

something kind to him before he went away forever. There was such a sadness in his voice and in his eyes that she could hardly stand it, and there was a real ache in her own heart. She put out both hands to him.

"Oh, Cousin Willie, I wish you would not go, and I hope you will be back before long. Don't you think you will?"'

He took her two hands and looked down into her eyes a minute with such entreaty in his own that hers fell before them.

"Are you *sure,* Lucy, there is no hope for me?" he said at last.

"Quite sure," said Lucy, under her breath.

With a quick pressure he dropped her hands. "Good-by, and God bless you," he added; and then, holding open the little gate, he added hoarsely, "Go, please."

With bent head she walked slowly through the gate and part way up the path; and then she stopped and looked around. Willie's arms were folded on the gate-post and his head was bent upon them, and she thought she heard what sounded like a suppressed sob. Frightened and almost awe-struck, she stole quickly away.

Willie's train left at six the next morning, and it was a heroic proof of devotion on Rex's part to get up in the shivering December air and walk down to the station with him. It was long before sunrise, but the moon, still almost full, reflected from the snowy campus, made it quite light. On their way

down the long path toward the Iron Gate, Willie looked up at Lucy's window to send her a last farewell in his thoughts. To his joyful surprise, a white handkerchief was fluttering from it. He took off his hat in response, and then in graceful Southern fashion kissed his hand to her and passed under the overarching trees, whose crystal foliage, making almost as effectual a screen as the leaves of June, hid him from Lucy's sight forever. A minute later she heard the Iron Gate clang; she knew he was gone, and she threw herself on her bed and buried her face in her pillow.

Who of the three, Rex or Willie or Lucy, could dream that seven months later, almost to the very day, all through the dreadful carnage of that hot July Sunday on the battle-field of the first Bull Run, a boyish figure should carry the Confederate colors proudly through the thickest of the fight; and when his comrades should be hunting their dead at night, that they would come upon him lying with smiling eyes upturned to the calm moon, and tightly clasping in his hands, that rested upon his heart, the picture of a beautiful girl, with a ring of golden hair tied by a bit of blue ribbon fastened to the velvet lining of the case!

"She stole quickly away."

CHAPTER XVII

AFTER BREAKFAST

REX had said, "Good-by," to Willie at the station, and Willie had seen a softer look in the black eyes than he had ever seen there before, while his own were so dim that he could hardly see Rex waving adieux to him while the Valley train moved slowly down Main Street until he was quite out of sight. Then Rex went back to his cheerless room, where the ashes of last night's fire lay dead on the hearth, and flung himself into his big chair and gave himself up to a gloomy reverie.

"I am a fool to stay here," he said at last aloud; "and I shall write to father to-day to release me from my promise."

He rose as he spoke and stretched his legs, shivering. He was stiff from sitting so long in the cold room, and he set himself to building a fire. He was not skilful at it, for Willie had always had the fire started before lazy Rex turned out in the morning, and he mentally resolved that he would engage "Judge" to come in daily and make it for him, now that Willie was gone.

After three or four futile attempts, the fire at last

consented to burn, and the cheerful crackle and the warm glow put Rex in a happier frame of mind. Old Sykes would come for Willie's furniture after breakfast, and "Judge" would be in to put his room in order, two doleful ceremonies that Rex would rather not be present at, if possible. He decided to go over to Dr. Charlton's immediately after breakfast, break the news of Willie's departure, and deliver his messages of farewell to the doctor and his wife.

It was the first day of the holidays and the Charltons were having a lazy eight-o'clock breakfast; so it happened that they had just sat down to the table when Rex's name was announced.

"Ask him to come right down to the dining-room," said Mrs. Charlton, her hospitable instincts delighted with the thought of welcoming an unexpected guest to her breakfast-table.

And so Rex, ushered by Charles Cook, junior, into the warm room fragrant with Mocha and beefsteak, made his most courtly bow at the door, and then went around the table, shaking hands with everybody, beginning with Mrs. Charlton and ending with little Millie, who, in response to his "Howdy, Miss Millie?" put her small hand in his and said gravely, "I am pretty well, I thank you, sir. How do you do?" Not quite everybody, either. He embraced the four boys in a general wave of his hand and a "Howdy, young gentlemen?" and then, his punctilious greetings ended, Mrs. Charlton insisted on his taking a seat at the table. He demurred at first, but Charles Cook, junior, obedient to her signal, placed a chair for him

between Lucy and the doctor and opposite Eunice, and the temptation of having a cup of Mrs. Charlton's delicious coffee and sitting *vis-à-vis* with Eunice was not to be resisted.

Rex was a keen observer, and so it had not escaped him that Lucy was looking pale and that her hand trembled as he took it, and he knew she divined his errand. It had not escaped him, either, that the little tongue of color that he had learned to recognize as a token of either embarrassment or emotion was burning brightly in Eunice's cheek, and that her hand was colder than it should have been in that warm room.

He did not disclose his errand at once, but when, taking advantage of a turn in the conversation that seemed to lead up to it, he announced that Willie was gone, the surprise and consternation depicted on the individual countenances quite delighted his love of effect. The doctor was surprised into a "Tut; tut!" the homely form of reproof he sometimes addressed to his boys when they grew too obstreperous or noisy at the table. "Tut! tut! Willie Dayton gone home!" And then, a suspicion suddenly striking him: "Did he go alone?"

"I am all that is left of the South Carolina delegation, sir," said Rex, a little twinkle in the tail of his eye at sight of the doctor's dismay. "Fifteen boys went off with Willie on the six-o'clock train."

The doctor saw the twinkle, and his manner changed at once.

"What do you mean, sir," he said sternly, "by in-

forming me of this only when it is too late to prevent their going? You are aware, I suppose, that I have instructions from the parents of every one of them to keep them here until they should be sent for."

The doctor was greatly excited, or he would never have spoken so to Rex, and in the presence of his family. The most genial of men, he was at times also the most severe, and the students stood in wholesome awe of him; but he was never unjust, and Rex flushed deeply at the doctor's implication.

Mrs. Charlton sprang to the rescue.

"My dear," she said gently, "you could hardly expect Mr. McAllister to play the part of an informer. It strikes me you are lashing the others over his shoulders, instead of giving him the praise he deserves for not having gone off with them."

His wife's words brought the doctor to himself, and he apologized to Rex instantly, adding also a courteous commendation of Rex himself. But he was still very much annoyed that he should have "failed so signally," as he said, in the trust reposed in him. He rubbed his head in whimsical perplexity:

"Dear! dear! how do you suppose the youngsters managed it?" with a keen glance at Rex. "I have been keeping them all on short allowance to prevent this very thing."

"I am afraid you think I have been aiding and abetting them, doctor," said Rex, with a smile; "but I have n't. I gave my word to my father, a month ago, that whatever happened I would stay here until he sent for me, and do my best to keep Willie. And

of course," he added proudly, "I have kept my word."

Rex was not as great a favorite with the doctor as with Mrs. Charlton. Perhaps his old reputation for being wild and reckless had alienated him from the one as much as it had endeared him to the other. Mrs. Charlton always loved most where she thought it was most needed; but the doctor had appreciated his recent efforts at reform and had felt much more kindly toward him, and now it was with a genuine glow of admiration that he turned to him and said warmly: "You have acted the part of a man of honor, and I esteem you for it."

Words of approbation from the doctor were a new thing to Rex, and they embarrassed him. He hastened to add:

"I hope you will not think Willie has been dishonorable, sir. He broke no promise, for he would not give one; and I am inclined to think his was the wiser way."

Now the doctor admired Rex all the more for his defense of his absent cousin. He was beginning to feel a real liking for the young man who was showing himself in such a generous light; but he was not going to spoil him by too much commendation, especially before the ladies, the presence of one of whom, he shrewdly suspected, would add greatly to its weight in Rex's eyes. So he only said:

"Perhaps so, perhaps so. I am not sure but if I had been a young fellow from the South, I should have done exactly as they have done, and should have

considered myself a patriot and a man of honor in doing it."

And then Rex flushed a little again, for he was feeling very sensitively that everybody would be likely to consider theirs the brave and manly course, and that the least taint of cowardice should cling to him was intolerable to his haughty spirit. He had regretted his promise a hundred times, but never so keenly as at this moment.

"Heaven knows," he said with sudden fire, "that I would give the world to be with them at this minute! I feel like a poltroon to stay behind. But I hope to be released from my promise soon, and then I shall follow them."

His fine head, with its dark curls, was flung proudly back, and his eyes flashed as he spoke. He looked very grand to Eunice, who stole a glance at him and, as her eyes met his, dropped hers suddenly to her plate. But Rex had caught the look of admiration in them before they fell, and it put him in a good humor for the rest of the meal. His steak was juicy and tender, his coffee was all that his boarding-house coffee was not, and it had been an hour since his own breakfast—quite time enough at his age to get up an appetite for another. And more than that, Eunice was sitting opposite, looking, he believed, prettier than he had ever seen her, in her morning-gown of soft gray with creamy lace at the throat tied with a knot of scarlet ribbon, the delicate color coming and going at his glance, and a shy pleasure in the calm gray eyes. Altogether, he was very happy in spite of the

fact that he had not gone to South Carolina with the boys.

He had not seen Eunice for two weeks. He had been keeping away, with some quixotic idea of giving Rogers a chance, for he had been seized with a sudden suspicion that Eunice loved him, and in a spasm of jealousy and generosity had determined to give him a free field. But his spasm had passed. Rogers would probably be home for the next four weeks, and the free field would be Rex's, and he had just about made up his mind to go in seriously and win—for as to the winning he had but little doubt. Rex was not given to distrusting his powers in affairs of the heart.

And it was all very pleasant: the bright and animated breakfast-table, its gracious lady at the head, in a becoming morning-cap of lace and ribbon, beaming brightly on the long table, surrounded by the shining morning faces. Very pleasant, when breakfast was over, to gather in a broad semicircle around the open fire of glowing coals while the good doctor read from the big Bible, and did not forget in the prayer that followed to pray for "the dear friend" with them. And very pleasant afterward to linger for more cheerful talk about the fire, and to see Eunice with a deprecating blush draw her tatting from her pocket, and watch her white fingers fly swiftly back and forth in the graceful occupation. Very pleasant —when Charles Cook, junior, had carried out the breakfast and the heavier dishes, and collected the glass and silver and more delicate china in neat piles,

and brought in his great japanned waiter with the hot water and towels—to have Mrs. Charlton say:

"Now, Mr. Charlton, you and Eunice and Mr. McAllister go up to the parlor, and Lucy and I will do the silver and china."

And pleasantest of all, when they were cozily seated about the parlor fire, to have Dr. Charlton excuse himself on the plea of work to be attended to in his office and leave Rex alone with Eunice.

Rex leaned back luxuriously in his deep chair when the doctor had closed the door behind him, and for a few moments gave himself up to silent enjoyment. Crimson damask draperies at the windows had been added to the light lace ones of the summer, and gave the room a cozy, shut-in effect; they hung from heavy, gilded cornices and were looped back with silk ropes far enough to admit the bright December sun and give glimpses of the shining ice-world outside. He could not divest himself of a feeling that they two were sitting at their own fireside, and he said to himself, "Just as she looks this morning, shall I see her every day in my Southern home." And as he looked at the slender figure, with its inalienable air of quaint primness, the drooping curls and softly falling dress, so different from the crinolined belles of the day, he decided in his own mind that in no particular would he have her different; he would not even have her give up her swiftly flying shuttle that had once so annoyed him.

Eunice felt his long scrutiny and was painfully embarrassed under it. She had wondered at his ab-

sence of two weeks, and had discovered in the interval that she had missed his gay, cheery presence. There had been no reason for his sudden defection, she thought, and she had fully intended to punish him for it by receiving him with great coolness when he should return. She assured herself that the discomfort she felt in his absence was chiefly owing to a fear that he might be returning to his former ways, from which she honestly longed to save him; and the anxiety she felt at the thought that Miss Lydia might have regained her influence over him she did not for a moment attribute to jealousy.

Now that they were alone, she expected momentarily that he would begin his explanations, which she intended to receive with reserve. She did not attempt to break the silence, which Rex was enjoying and she was finding trying, but with eyes on her shuttle waited for him to begin. It was startling, therefore, to have him suddenly abandon his lazy lounging and, bending toward her, say:

"I have not heard what you think, Miss Eunice, of South Carolina's going out."

Eunice's eyes were on her work, but she was conscious of the look that was in those dark ones resting on her, and her fingers flew faster than ever as she answered:

"I think it was not only a wicked thing to do, but an extremely foolish one."

As he did not reply immediately, she added with a nervous little laugh, and glancing up from her work for a moment:

"I presume you do not agree with me."

Rex met her glance with a smile, and there was such a subtle quality of perfect confidence and all-pervading warmth in the smile that Eunice's calm pulses began to flutter as her eyes fell on her work again.

"No, of course not," said Rex, half-musingly: "but I was not thinking so much of that as of what you said that evening when Mrs. Charlton was so aroused about John Brown. Do you remember it?"

"I do not remember saying anything worth remembering," said Eunice, her pulses growing calm again at his unexpected answer.

Rex leaned a little nearer and tried to look under the lids that were persistently dropped.

"Don't you remember saying," he said softly, "that you thought a wife's country should be her husband's —that she should leave home, friends, and native land for him?"

Eunice's shuttle flew with incredible swiftness, but she answered with outward calmness:

"I am not sure, but I may have made some such remark. I have always believed that marriage cancels all other obligations, and that a wife should let no difference of opinion that she can reconcile with her conscience creep in to destroy the unity of the marriage relation."

Rex smiled at the quaint formality of the little speech, but its coldness was more than atoned for by the color that came and went in her cheek and the tremulous quiver of the sensitive chin. He was still nearer now, so that the faint aroma of fine cigars

peculiar to him, and that, in spite of Eunice's prejudices, affected her like an exquisite perfume, was plainly perceptible. He boldly took the swiftly flying hands in his, and laid the shuttle in her lap.

"I like to watch you at your work, Eunice," he said, "it is so pretty and graceful; but not now, my darling. I want you to look at me and tell me that you love me and that you will go with me to my Southern home; that you will leave friends and native land—all—for your husband."

There was no fear in his tone, nothing but joyous love and tenderness. For one moment Eunice raised her eyes to his and saw the glowing look of love, and the handsome face illumined and ennobled by his strong feeling, until it seemed to her surpassing even the face of her girlish dreams in its manly beauty. For one moment she longed to yield to the delight of being loved by such a lover, so grand did he seem to her. Her colder nature longed for the ardent love that should infold it in such an atmosphere of luxuriant warmth. He saw the moment of hesitation, and his warm hands, still holding her cold ones, drew her gently toward him. Then swiftly it came to her—all that this love meant. She knew him really so slightly, she distrusted him so much, and in her ardent patriotism she felt that all South Carolinians were traitors. Marry a traitor! Impossible! She drew back frigidly and struggled to release her hands.

"No!" she said; "it can never be. How could I go and live in South Carolina, when I think South

Carolina has acted so wickedly, and South Carolinians are little better than—" she faltered a little over the word—"traitors?" He did not relinquish her hands, and his tone hardly lost any of its joyousness.

"Have you forgotten," he said softly, "that the wife is to think as her husband? Your country will be mine, my darling, and you will not think me a traitor, but a patriot."

"But I am not your wife," she faltered; and then, with an effort at recovering her calmness: "Please let go my hands, Mr. McAllister; it would be impossible, I think, even if you were not a South Carolinian. I do not believe I could make you happy. Our lives have been so different, and *we* are so different."

"No," he said, in answer to her struggles to release her hands; "they are mine; I shall not let them go until you tell me that you do not love me. You have not told me that," looking at her with a confident smile; "and no difference of life, of education or country, can make any difference, if you love me."

The ardor of his tones, his glowing glances, were almost more than Eunice could resist. She felt herself half yielding in spite of her convictions. His words thrilled her to the heart, but they roused her, too, to make a stronger resistance to the magnetism of his pleading.

"Mr. McAllister, I appeal to your chivalrous nature, to your honor as a Southern gentleman, not to try me beyond my powers of resistance. I do not think

I love you. If I were sure I did, I would not marry you; and I am almost sure I do not."

Eunice had made the one appeal Rex could not be deaf to. Up to this time he had been joyous, almost laughing, so sure was he that she loved him and would yield at last. Now he laid her hands gently in her lap, but kept hold of one of them while he spoke very gravely:

"As long as you are not certain that you do not love me, Eunice, you must give me the benefit of the uncertainty. I am sure you will love me sometime. You were made for me. I have felt it almost from the first moment I saw you. You *must* love me. What does anything else in the world mean, if we love each other? All these troubles between the South and the North will soon be over. Perhaps South Carolina will be back in the Union. I have no doubt she will, if the North will yield her claims. If she is not, what difference will it make? You would marry me if I were an Englishman or a Frenchman, if you loved me, and you would go with me to the ends of the earth. I will be no more of a foreigner, if I am a South Carolinian, and you will not have to go so far away."

"Oh, Mr. McAllister," said Eunice, desperately, "*can* you not see? Of course it would make no difference to you. *You* would not have to leave your friends. *You* would not have to be false to your country; but I should feel myself a traitor if I married you, and I *cannot*—I *will* not. Have pity on me and do not ask me."

There were actual tears in those calm gray eyes that Rex had sometimes thought too cold for tears. Her tone was so imploring and her distress so evident that Rex could not resist her appeal.

"Eunice, darling," he said, "I love you too much to be willing to distress you. I will not ask you now to marry me. I am sure time will remove all these obstacles that seem so insuperable to you. But you have not told me that you love me. Give me that assurance, and I will wait for the rest."

Eunice waited a long moment before she answered slowly and timidly:

"You will always be a dear friend to me, Mr. McAllister; but I do not believe I love you as you want me to, and I would rather you would not think of me in that way."

"I will never cease to think of you 'in that way,' Eunice," said Rex, with a little smile; "but I am not going to reject your friendship. Let me be your 'dear friend' until you are willing to receive me as your dear lover. I am sure you will, some day. A dear friend may kiss your hand just once, may he not?" And, without waiting for her consent, he lifted it to his lips.

There was such an air of mingled gallantry and deference, of restrained passion and protecting tenderness, in the little act, and such high-bred grace in the manner of it, that perhaps Eunice was nearer yielding than she had been when he was pleading most ardently. At that moment the bell rang and Mr. Rogers was announced,—come, he said, to make his

adieus to the family,—he was to leave on the next train. Rex lingered to chat with him a few moments, engaging him at once in an animated conversation on the exodus of the morning, until Eunice had had time to recover her usual calm exterior, and then he took his leave, promising to see Rogers off at the station.

He was not discouraged. It fretted him a little that he could not immediately have the full fruition of his hopes—for, his mind once made up that he wanted Eunice for a wife, he was impatient for her promise; but he was sure it would come in time, and he determined to make such good use of the next four weeks that Rogers's return should find Eunice his affianced bride. He could afford to feel good-natured toward Rogers; and, aside from his real liking for him, he began to feel a little sorry for him, too, so that his "Good-by" at the station was unconsciously tinged with a slight air of pity and condescension that Mr. Rogers found difficult to understand as he mused over it on his homeward way.

CHAPTER XVIII

A STERN RESOLVE

THE four weeks of the holidays passed quickly. Rex had gone about his wooing with energy. There were sleighing-parties to Mount Holly, where mine host of the Holly Inn gave them a warm reception, with hot oysters and coffee. There were skating-parties to "Pike's Pond," with a two-mile walk over the frozen fields, brisk and pleasant on the way out, but long and weary enough on the way home, were it not that a tired and drooping little form leaned more confidingly than perhaps it was aware on the strong arm that would have liked to give it even more decided support. There were long morning calls, too, when they translated Heine's poems together, or Rex read Tennyson while Eunice busied herself with a bit of dainty sewing; for Eunice could not quite reconcile it with her conscience to spend the precious morning hours without the excuse of some "improving" occupation.

But, after all, when the four weeks were over, and Mr. Rogers had returned, Eunice was not his affianced bride, as Rex had fondly hoped. And if Rogers had mused over the condescension of Rex's parting

manner, he mused still more over the melancholy air with which he wrung his hand as he welcomed him back again.

Eunice had enjoyed the sleigh-rides, the skating, the morning readings, soothing any scruples she might have otherwise had, because of the perfect understanding she supposed existed between them, and that there was no danger of a return to Rex's question. But in drifting along so pleasantly, she suddenly awoke to a realization of the fact that her own peace was becoming seriously endangered.

It was one morning when Rex was reading aloud from Tennyson—a dangerous pastime for two young people to indulge in, for there is always sure to be some passage so wonderfully appropriate to themselves, and made doubly eloquent by a tone or a glance. Now as Rex read the tenderest lines the great poet ever wrote, King Arthur's farewell to Guinevere, and came to the words,

> "My doom is, I love thee still;
> Let no man dream but that I love thee still,"

he looked up at Eunice with all his soul in his eyes, and made the words his own, an infinite meaning in the tender inflections of his voice. Then Eunice knew that she could not go on listening to those low, rich tones nor meet the eloquent glances of those dark, beautiful eyes.

She was more than ever sure that she could never marry him. There seemed less hope every day of a

peaceable adjustment of the difficulties between the North and the South. If she could bring her own conscience to consent, she knew it would break her father's heart, whose weekly letters breathed ardent and long-drawn denunciations of the wicked and corrupt South, to which Eunice would have once subscribed most heartily, but which somehow hurt her a little now.

The reading had moved her greatly. Her heart was all melted and torn with pity for the beautiful Queen lying at the feet of Arthur, but more for the great King whose "vast pity almost made him die to see her laying there her golden head," and Rex's tone and look were the one touch she could not stand.

Eunice! The calm, self-restrained, unimpassioned Eunice was sobbing, her face buried in her work! Rex was bewildered, and his heart was in his mouth at the sight of her distress. He did not stop to reason. All the rigid self-control he had imposed upon himself vanished in a moment. He was beside her, holding her in his arms, kissing her hair, her forehead, the hands that covered her eyes, and whispering, "What is it, my darling, my love, my own Eunice?"

For the fraction of a minute Eunice's head rested on his shoulder, and she felt his kisses and heard his impassioned words, and a wild impulse seized her to trample on her conscience, defy her friends, and yield to this love that was so sweet. But in her heart she knew she could not, and freeing herself with a desperate effort, she looked up at him.

"Please go," she said, "and do not come back any

more. I can never marry you, and *I will not* love you if I can help it!"

"Eunice," he said triumphantly, and trying once more to draw her to him, "you cannot help it—you do love me!"

But she eluded his arms, and with clasped hands and entreaty in her eyes and voice she said:

"Oh, I am afraid I do! But if I do, you must help me not to. It can bring us both nothing but anguish. I cannot break my father's heart nor trample on my own self-respect. I throw myself on your pity and generosity—help me *not* to love you, for I will *never marry* you!"

In the very midst of her distress there flashed into her mind a conviction that she was playing the tragedy queen quite as much as Mrs. Charlton had done on that October evening, and she felt humiliated and made a desperate effort to recover her usual composure. As for Rex, a slow conviction was pressing itself on his heart that this little Puritan maiden really meant what she said; that though she might love him, it would be against her will, and she would never yield herself to his love. With the conviction came a dull feeling of anger. He felt like one dashing himself helplessly against a stone wall. He resented her firmness—"obstinacy," he called it. For the first time in his life his own imperious will came in conflict with one not so imperious, but stronger.

"Eunice," he said angrily, "this is all nonsense! You either love me, or you do not. If you love me, there is no law of right or wrong in the universe that

ought to separate us. You are mine; heaven has ordained it; what right has earth to deny it? If you will say to me truthfully and from your heart that you do not love me, then I will go and trouble you no more."

Eunice had regained her calmness with Rex's rising anger, and she answered steadily:

"I wish I could say truthfully that I do not love you. I cannot. I am not sure that I will not love you always, long after you shall have forgotten me. But that does not alter my decision. I know I am right when I say that I will not marry you." She hesitated a moment, and then went on with a slight trembling of her even tones: "It will be much better for us both if we see but little of each other, and I may never again speak to you alone. Dear friend, will you remember this of me: that always when I hear of you leading a noble, upright life, true to your own convictions of right, my heart will swell with pride in you and gratitude to God for having once given me the love of such a man? And the greatest sorrow that could ever come to me—but I am sure it never will come—would be to hear that you had gone backward, that you were no longer true to your own high and noble nature. And as long as we two shall live, Rex,"—she spoke his name softly,—"I will pray for you."

Eunice's voice had dropped lower and lower as she spoke, but every word fell with crystal clearness on Rex's heart. He had flung himself down sullenly in his chair when she began to speak, but as she went on he leaned forward, his elbows resting on his knees,

his head bowed in his hands; and so he sat for a few minutes after she had ceased speaking. Then he arose; the sullenness was all gone, and there was a look in his dark eyes that Eunice could hardly understand—half sad, half stern.

"It shall be as you wish," he said; "I will go."

He took her hand and looked long into her eyes, either with the hope that even yet she might relent, or with the feeling that it was for the last time.

"I shall not forget what you have said, and I shall not cease utterly to hope; for I believe that you love me, and some day you will see that you are wrong and I am right. Until that day I shall not trouble you; and if it is your wish we will meet as the merest acquaintances. Yet I do not want you to think that I am not loving you all the time. Every throb of my heart, while life lasts, is yours."

He clasped the hand he held with so fierce a grip that she would have cried out with pain but that she saw he was unconscious of hurting her, and was struggling with some strong impulse. Suddenly he almost flung it from him.

"No," he said sternly; "I will wait!" And then seeing her look of surprise and pain, he added more gently:

"I was going to ask you, Eunice, to kiss me, for this may be a long parting. But I have concluded that I do not want to run the risk of a refusal or of your compliance from mere pity. I will wait until, some day, you come to me and say, 'Rex, I love you, and I will be your wife.' "

Eunice was looking up at him in mute appeal. Her

whole soul was longing to give him that kiss. Now that she felt this was the end of it all, even her stern conscience would not have felt it wrong so to consecrate the death and burial of this love. Rex understood her look and answered it.

"I must go at once, or I will break my resolve," he said; and then, with sudden heat and between his set teeth, "I will not have your kisses, Eunice Harlowe, until I can have *you.*"

He whirled on his heel and, with no adieu but his customary low bow, quitted the room, leaving Eunice standing motionless, half shocked and frightened at his last words and tones and the fierce glow in his dark eyes.

CHAPTER XIX

THE GUNS OF SUMTER

THE days and weeks dragged wearily along for Eunice. She had hardly realized how much she would miss Rex's bright presence, and what a void there would be in her life which none of the simple merrymakings of Bellaire society could fill. Rex called occasionally on Mrs. Charlton and the ladies, and Mrs. Charlton, suspecting that meant Eunice, tried at first to excuse herself. But Eunice gave her so quietly and so decidedly to understand that it did not, and that she would on no account go to the parlor without her, that Mrs. Charlton concluded at once there was trouble of some kind between them. She confided her suspicions to Dr. Charlton, and the good doctor was much concerned.

"I was afraid once," he said, "that Rex was inclined to amuse himself with her; but I believe now that it has been a grand passion with him, and she certainly has produced a wonderful transformation in him. I would almost be willing to trust him to make her happy now; but of course since South Carolina has seceded, they can never marry, and I am heartily sorry for them both. Do you think, my

dear,'' anxiously,—''that she feels it much? I would not have her coming here result in suffering for worlds.''

''I am sure I can't tell,'' returned Mrs. Charlton, reflectively; ''she is always so quiet and so reserved. But I sometimes fancy she is a little paler, and she certainly eats almost nothing—hardly enough to keep her alive, I should say.''

''Dear! dear!'' groaned the doctor, ruefully; ''these troublesome young people! Can't you get her to confide in you, my love? It would help her just to talk it over.''

Mrs. Charlton promised to try, but she never succeeded. There was no getting near enough to Eunice on that subject to make the beginning of a confidence.

Once Eunice did not go down when, as usual, Rex called for the ladies. The very next day, ''Judge'' brought her a note. It read:

''EUNICE: *Never* do that again. I only call when I feel that I must see you, *must* look on your dear face, or die. Do not deny me that one small pleasure.

''REX.''

And so she always came down to the parlor when he called, and plied her little shuttle, while Rex talked to Mrs. Charlton and Lucy, with an occasional remark to ''Miss Harlowe,'' to whom he was always coldly formal, and went away strengthened in his determination to win her finally, but more hopeless than ever of any immediate yielding on her part.

As for Eunice, as the days went on, in spite of

Rex's note, she began to feel that he could not really care for her. He passed her on the street with the most formal bow. She had met him once walking with Miss Lydia and apparently in the gayest spirits, and rumor had it that he was paying marked attention to Miss Annie Allen, the organist. Eunice said to herself that she was glad, and that she had judged him rightly when she thought him incapable of a serious attachment; and yet she knew she was miserable, and she took herself roundly to task when she discovered that it made her misery far more acute to think that he was so quickly consoled, than if she had believed him unhappy and secretly pining for her.

And so the weeks went on, and now spring had come; the crocuses and snowdrops of March had given place to the daffodils and hyacinths and tulips of April. Peach-trees and cherry-trees were masses of pink and white bloom, and there was a tender green on the maples and lindens in the campus. The trees that arched Lovers' Lane threw lace-like shadows on the path that Eunice always took on her morning walk to school through the soft, fragrant air, and the birds sang their nuptial songs on the high boughs with riotous joy.

Never did the sun shine so brightly nor the birds sing so madly nor the flowers bloom so sweetly as in that spring of '61. Yet a dark cloud, gloomy with portents of war, hung over the land, and anxious eyes were turned constantly to distant South Carolina, and ears were strained to catch the echoes of that first

shot, now hourly expected. And at last it came. It rolled over the fair valleys of the South, and reverberated among the mountains of the North, until it filled the land with its awful thunders.

There were many hearts, North and South, that turned faint and sick under those first dreadful sounds, and among them were two at least in the little family circle of the Charltons. Mrs. Charlton felt that the dividing stroke had fallen at last that separated her from kindred and friends; and Eunice knew that unsatisfactory and painful as had been her intercourse with Rex through the last few months, even that was at an end now.

It was Tuesday morning when the news reached them, and she was not surprised when, in the afternoon, "Judge" brought her a note. She read it with a pale face and a beating heart.

"EUNICE: I go in a day or two—perhaps to-morrow. I *must* see you before I go. Meet me at eight o'clock this evening in Lovers' Lane."

It did not even occur to her not to meet him. She, too, felt that she must see him for the last time. When she passed through the little gate into the lane, there was light enough from a young moon, whose rays fell freely through the thin foliage, to see him walking with hurried strides, his back to her, down toward the Iron Gate. At the click of the little gate he turned quickly and came toward her. He stopped directly in front of her, and without waiting a moment began:

"Eunice, will you marry me and go home with me to-morrow?" She could see very plainly his white, stern face, and the feverish glow in his dark eyes. She longed to say, "Yes, I will go." Country and friends, father and mother—nothing seemed to her then of much moment compared with the happiness of seeing that pale, beautiful face light up with joy and love. But she only shook her head and said, "I cannot, Rex." He looked at her a moment with wild eyes, and then seizing her hand in a vice-like grip, he said fiercely:

"You don't know what you say, Eunice. You *must!* Do you know"—hoarsely—" what the guns of Sumter mean? I did not believe it for a long time, but I know now. It is war! When I go from here I go to fight, perhaps to death. I cannot die unless you bear my name. It is grim courting, Eunice; but I am not asking you so much to be my wife as to be my widow. I can go bravely to battle when I feel that in fighting for my home I am fighting for you, and that if I die there is one wearing my name who will mourn for me, and that if you cannot be mine on earth, you will be mine in heaven."

She tried to speak, but he would not let her.

"There is only one word that I want to hear you say, Eunice. Come with me now to Dr. Charlton, and say it there. He will marry us when he knows how it is, and to-morrow we will go home together. Come, Eunice, now—this very minute."

As well try to drag the Plymouth Rock from its eternal foundations as to move this little Puritan maiden.

He was maddened by her sad but firm resistance, and for a moment he had wild thoughts of picking her up in his arms and fleeing with her to the ends of the earth. To feel himself helpless before a slender girl that he could crush in his arms, made him beside himself. He would not at first recognize that he could not prevail with her by the mere strength of his determination. When at last it slowly dawned upon him that there was absolutely no hope, despair and resentment were almost equally mingled in his heart.

Eunice, her own heart torn with anguish for herself, and for him even more, would have tried to comfort him in every gentle and tender way; but he would not listen to her. He stood a minute looking off with fierce eyes and stern lips, and she crept up to him and laid her hand lightly on his arm, looking up with eyes that pleaded mutely for kindness and forgiveness. He glanced down and met the look, but it did not melt him. He flung her hand from his arm and laughed bitterly.

"I might have known," he said, "that you were a cold, heartless Yankee. I have been a fool!"

And then with elaborate courtesy:

"Miss Harlowe, I cannot leave you here. Shall I accompany you to the house?"

She turned and walked beside him, hoping every moment his mood would change, but not daring to say anything to him while that bitter smile still lingered on his face. At the foot of the steps she stopped

and put out her hand, faltering, "Good-by, Rex," but he would not notice the hand. With an ironical bow, he said, "I will bid you good evening, Miss Harlowe," and, lifting his hat, passed through the little gate in the hedge without a backward glance.

It was a long and weary night for Eunice, who lived over every word and every look from the day when she first saw him on the Burton steps to this last bitter parting. She did not know when he would go: perhaps on that same early train the other South Carolinians had taken. If she could only see him once more, and have him tell her that he forgave her for the pain she had made him suffer!

At half-past five o'clock she rose, glad to forsake her weary bed, and throwing a dressing-gown around her, she sat down by the window. In a few moments she saw "Judge" with his wheelbarrow piled with trunks and boxes, and she knew then he was going, and sat watching with painful eagerness for a last glimpse of him.

She saw him: his graceful, erect figure dressed, as usual, with the last degree of carefulness, walking rapidly, and talking earnestly to Mr. Rogers, who was beside him. Once he turned towards her window, but before she could open the shutter through which she was looking and wave her hand in farewell, he was out of sight. She listened a few moments more, and heard the Iron Gate clang, and then she turned drearily away. The romance of her life was ended.

But after breakfast "Judge" brought her a little

note. She tore it open with trembling fingers and read with eyes that could hardly see:

"DEAR EUNICE: Forgive me for my rudeness to-night. I was wild with pain, but that is no excuse for being so cruel to you, and so far forgetting myself. You are the dearest, sweetest, loveliest woman God ever made—the only woman in the world for me. In life and in death I am yours,

"REX."

CHAPTER XX

WEARING HER COLORS

IT was fortunate for Eunice that the rush of events distracted all attention from her pale face and languid air. Struggle as she might, she could not rouse herself to any animation, or any show of interest in the great drama enacting around her. To her horror, she began to feel that her interest lay with the other side, and she loathed herself as a creature without patriotism and without honor.

The President's call for seventy-five thousand men, following fast on the fall of Sumter, threw the college into even wilder excitement. The Southerners who had remained up to this time, either in obedience to commands from home or because they believed the troubles would soon be settled and there would be no necessity for leaving, decamped at once. Among the Northern students, many responded to Lincoln's call, and left the campus for the field. Those three-months' men were the very pick and flower of the country, brave young fellows of the noblest aspirations, and a large proportion of them from the colleges of the land. Lucy was full of enthusiasm and glowing with patriotism, and Eunice felt like a

traitor by contrast, her heart was so cold and dead within her.

But though she escaped much observation through the stir of the times that drew all thoughts in one direction, she did not wholly escape it. Dr. and Mrs. Charlton noticed her air of passive endurance, her lack of joyous enthusiasm, and thought they understood it, and in every way tried to shield and encourage her with their silent sympathy. Mr. Rogers noticed it, also, and it brought him the keenest pain when he, too, thought he understood it.

On that early-morning walk to the train, Rex had told him just enough of his story to make his heart ache for the two lovers separated by such a grim fate. He was full of tender pity for Eunice, and one evening, as they walked slowly along the familiar Lovers' Lane, he told her how much he had learned to love Rex of late, and then drew her on to talk of him with such delicate sympathy that, almost before she knew what she was doing, Eunice found herself confiding to him all the bitterness and anguish this love had brought her: shame that she should love a traitor, anguish that nothing but an eternal separation lay before them.

In his clear, strong fashion, Mr. Rogers showed her there ought to be no shame. Rex, in his mistaken way, was as much a patriot as himself, and she must not look upon this separation as eternal. A few months would settle all these troubles, and then there would be no reason in the world why she should not give her hand where she had given her heart.

It was a strange rôle for him to be playing,—pleading the cause of his rival,—and he recognized it and smiled a little bitterly to himself. But he was rewarded in the brightness and hope that communicated themselves to Eunice's tones when she next spoke. He had really rolled a great load from her heart, restored her to her self-respect, and given her a little hope in place of the black despair that had been crushing her; and he was unselfishly glad to have been able to comfort her. But his own spirits fell as hers rose, and he felt the need of a little comfort from her in turn.

"After all," he said, "Rex is greatly to be envied: he is going out to try the fortunes of war with a star of love and hope to brighten the path of duty. I can easily understand that death itself would have no terrors for a man glorified by such an assurance, and I can find it in my heart to envy him."

There was a ring of sadness in his tones that Eunice did not for one moment connect with herself, but that yet touched her heart. She felt he was not happy, and she wondered in a vague way if there could be some one in his Philadelphia home whose unkindness made him envy Rex's lot.

The weeks passed on, crowded with excitement and intense feeling. The college, drained by both North and South, numbered a mere handful of students; and, added to all the anxiety of the times, the good doctor trembled for the life of Old Tomlinson. He knew that he was at the helm, and upon his skil-

ful guidance alone hung its fate, whether it should founder on the rocks or outride the storms.

Eunice went home for two summer vacations and returned in the following Septembers; but by the fall of '62 war prices and hard times had begun to tell upon people living on salaries. One by one, her patrons had been compelled to withdraw their children from a school where tuition must be paid and send them to the free public ones. Early in the fall it was evident St. John's school must close, and Eunice, left with almost no money, far from home and too late to make any other engagement for the year, would have found herself in great straits but for Dr. Charlton, who offered her a home and a tiny salary to teach his children until she could find something better, and kept a constant lookout to find the something better for her.

He was greatly embarrassed himself. The endowment of the college had always been small, and now much of its funds became unavailable, being invested in the South or in securities that the war made unprofitable. The number of students was far too small to pay the running expenses, and the faculty had to submit to big deficits in their small salaries. Early in the war prices had gone up with a rush to three and four times their old rates, and it was the necessaries of life that went the highest. How that little band of devoted professors ever lived through those four years is an unsolved enigma. Dr. Charlton, with his clear vision, saw at once that the only hope for the college was in an endowment, and then began

a series of herculean labors to secure a sufficient sum to make it independent—labors that eventually placed the college on a solid foundation of prosperity; but the anxiety, the strain, and the almost superhuman exertions of that anxious time told heavily on his health and strength.

Eunice was learning to love the Charltons dearly in the hardships they suffered together through those two years of the war. Mrs. Charlton was shining in a new light as a careful and able financier. The table that had once been so generous was almost meager now, and her children's clothes and her own were turned and twisted to an incredible extent to keep up the respectability of outside appearance that she felt her position demanded. She had prided herself once upon her fancied economies; they were very real ones now. Yet when the times were darkest and when even the doctor's buoyant spirits had turned blue and despondent, she had always a beaming smile and cheering word to make the home circle bright and happy.

In all these long months Eunice had heard from Rex but once, and that was a little note scribbled hurriedly in the saddle and intrusted to a friendly Union picket to mail. The picket had been true to his trust, and the little line that said, "I am thinking of you and waiting for you.—Rex," was almost her most cherished possession: not quite—the note that she had received the morning after he went away would always hold the first place.

But it was very shortly before one of the great

battles of the early war that Eunice had received this note from Rex, and none had come from him since. Sometimes she feared he had fallen in that battle, and indeed when she read of the awful carnage on both sides with which the papers were full after every battle, she wondered how he could possibly escape. Her heart turned sick within her, and life under the blue and gold skies of that smiling valley looked gray and cold to her.

Through all these dreadful months the friendship of John Rogers was a tower of strength to her. He had not gone to the front with the tide that swept out from the college at Lincoln's first call, but had kept steadily on with his college course. In those days it required almost more moral courage to stay than to go. Rogers had made his decision, deliberately, to watch the course of events and be ready when he found that he was really needed. From the first he had not shared the sanguine hopes of those who thought the war to be only an affair of a few months; he believed it would be a war of years. If so, there would be no coming back to college to finish his education, and he deliberately determined to go steadily ahead with it now as long as he could. The hour might easily come when his country would need him more than it needed him now, and he would be ready; but in the meantime he would secure as much as possible of the equipment that he felt so necessary to his future usefulness.

On a golden September Sunday morning Eunice was in her old place in the choir of St. John's.

Rogers was beside her as leader, for college had opened two weeks before and he had come back to finish his senior year. Down in the church below there was but a thin scattering of black coats as compared with the throng that had darkened the rear of the church on Eunice's first Sunday at St. John's; and to Eunice they looked more like boys than like the young men of two years before. She wondered whether it was because she herself felt so much older that they seemed so much younger, or whether the young men had all gone to the war and there were none but boys left to send to college.

For days there had been flying rumors of a great invasion. Lee was sending his Army of Northern Virginia up the Valley. It had already crossed the Potomac, and now no one in Bellaire doubted that an invasion of Pennsylvania was intended. For days great droves of cattle and horses had been passing through Bellaire, the farmers driving them northward to a place of safety, and that very morning there had come a rumor that Harper's Ferry had fallen. Harper's Ferry was the gateway to the Valley; and that little handful of people devoutly joining in the services on that golden morning of the fall of '62 were a-quiver with excitement and dread.

On their way home from choir rehearsal the evening before (for it had come to be understood between them that he should be always on hand to take Rex's place when an attendant was needed), Mr. Rogers had said he had received notice that his company was liable to be called out at any moment.

"I had a great mind to wear my uniform to-night," he said gaily, for he saw that Eunice was shocked and trembling at the news. "I wanted you to see how well I look in it. My sword and belt arrived to-day—I 'm first lieutenant, you know. I tried them on before supper, and I look very grand, I assure you."

Then, as Eunice did not speak, he stopped a moment under the trees and added gravely:

"Dear Eunice, Rex went out to battle blessed and crowned by a love that must give him courage to go joyously to death or victory. I have no such inspiration. If I die, there are few to mourn me, and it will make no real difference in any one's life. If I go now, I go to stay until the war is over, for I shall exchange as soon as possible from the militia into the veterans. Will you not send me forth with your blessing? Will you not think of me sometimes in the tent or on the field, where I shall often think of you?"

It was harder than ever for Eunice to speak, and her voice was so low and trembled so greatly that Rogers had to bend his head to catch her words.

"Oh, my friend," she faltered, "I shall think of you very, very often. I am proud of your friendship, and to know that you are fighting to preserve the country we both love will help greatly to mitigate my shame that I should love one who is fighting to destroy it."

This morning, up in the choir, she was finding it hard to follow the words of the good pastor—noble and stirring words, inspired by the greatness of the

times; instead she was involuntarily listening for the signal that should call this friend, too, to that black gulf of battle and death.

They had sung for anthem the noble "Battle Hymn of the Republic":

"In the beauty of the lilies Christ was born across the sea,
With a glory in his bosom that transfigures you and me;
As he died to make men holy, let us die to make them free,
While God is marching on;"

and with all hearts glowing with the stirring words and music, the preacher had taken his text:

"Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it; except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh in vain."

There could have been no better music, no better text, with which to send out to battle those young hearts beating high with courage and patriotism; but Eunice, listening to them, kept thinking of the Southern camps, where at this very moment zealous army chaplains were preaching—perhaps from the same text—to bronzed and war-worn veterans in gray. Who could tell which was the Lord's side?

And then, in the midst of her questionings, she heard a slight stir in the rear of the church below. She leaned a little forward over the railing of the gallery and saw a man moving silently about among the students, who, one after another, rose and quietly stole out of the church. In a few moments the same

man had mounted the gallery stairs and was speaking to Mr. Rogers and to two or three others in the choir. Rogers turned to her and his lips formed the words, "It has come"; then he, too, stole away after the others.

College discipline was stern in those days. In the tremendous excitement of the morning there had been a line of students at the doctor's office begging to be excused from church. But there was something of the Spartan in Dr. Charlton's nature, and he had but one reply for each: "The duty of the morning is to attend divine service; if the summons comes, let it find us at our post, like good soldiers." And such was the magnetism of his personality and the inspiration of his glowing eye that there were no murmurings among the disappointed students.

Now, however, it was another matter. The summons had come! At the stir among the students the doctor caught the preacher's eye and signaled to him that it would be better to close the service at once; and with his thirdly and fourthly and his grand closing peroration yet untouched, the good man announced the doxology, and as the last note died away he extended his hands over the bowed heads of the people and with trembling voice prayed:

"The blessing of the Lord God of battles be upon you and abide with you, and may the strength of our Lord go with those who go forth this hour to war."

Then was there hurry and rush on the quiet Sabbath streets. In all directions boys and young men were running wildly, and the women and the older

men were not far behind them. You might have thought the rebels were at their doors, such was the excitement in the staid old town.

Dr. Charlton had been among the foremost to reach the college; he must see his boys before they were off. From room to room he went, encouraging the pale and trembling ones, restraining the ardor of the too impetuous, leaving words of cheer and wisdom and benediction with all. His heart was wrung. They were but boys, only a few years older than his own two little fellows, and who could tell what lay before them!

At home Mrs. Charlton was working feverishly. The children stood around in an awe-struck circle to see mother sew on Sunday; for she and Lucy and Eunice were hurriedly making such little comforts as they thought the young soldiers might need in camp. No one thought of dinner, for in two hours there would be on the siding in front of the campus the train that was to bear these brave young fellows down the Valley to meet Lee!

There had been a constant stream of callers at the Charlton house. Every boy leaving the college had run in for a moment to say good-by to dear Mrs. Charlton, who sent them all off with the mother's blessing their own mothers would have longed to give them, with tears and smiles and brave words that comforted many a boyish heart on that bloody battle-field of Antietam toward which their young faces were set.

Last of all came John Rogers, with no more excitement in his manner than usual, only perhaps a little

graver than was his wont. He brought his sword and his belt in his hand, and before them all he boldly asked Eunice to buckle them on for him and send him out like the knights of old with her blessing. As he watched her slender fingers performing their office tremblingly, but with the deftness natural to them, he said, trying to speak lightly:

"And now I claim the right to wear your colors; you must let me have that little scarlet ribbon at your throat to tie in my buttonhole. You see," he explained to Dr. and Mrs. Charlton and Lucy, who stood by, "since Miss Harlowe cannot go into the army and do her own fighting, I have promised to represent her on the field as her devoted friend and brother, and I think that gives me a right to wear her colors."

And so he went off, to return no more until the war should be over,—to all appearance gaily, proudly clanking his sword and wearing his bit of scarlet with the fond wishes and tremulous blessing of his four friends showered upon him.

CHAPTER XXI

FLIGHT FROM THE OLD TOWN

THE June of '63 was no less lovely and smiling and peaceful than Junes had always been in the beautiful Northumberland Valley. Little did Nature seem to know or care that the great Southern general was even then making ready an army of invasion to despoil her of her beauty. Only nine months since the Army of Northern Virginia had crossed the Potomac, and now Lee was preparing for another crossing with a more powerful army, whose goal should be not Maryland, but Pennsylvania, and whose object not raiding and inciting to insurrection but invasion and conquest. He was grimly determined to risk the future of the Southern Confederacy on this one cast of the die.

It was Commencement Week at Old Tomlinson, always the gala week of the year in Bellaire; and whether Commencement had been set for the blooming of the roses, or whether the roses timed their blossoming to Commencement, the old town was a riot of bloom. From countless gardens, shut in by high brick walls, floated the fragrance of millions of the lovely flower; the barracks were abloom with them, and the president's garden was a glorious bower of

them—every winding path hedged with them, and long garlands of roses, pink and white and red, flung over every lattice and trellis and arbor.

Eunice, standing in their midst on this sweet June evening, a white rose herself in her flowing gown of white, murmured softly:

> "If on earth be an Eden of bliss,
> It is this—it is this!"

She was alone; the others had either gone or were going to the evening's exercises, but Eunice was not going. A letter from Mr. Rogers a few weeks before had said that he hoped to get a two days' leave of absence and spend Wednesday and Thursday of Commencement in Bellaire and take his diploma with his class as Dr. Charlton had promised he should. But this sudden invasion of Lee's had spoiled all that: there was no getting away from the army now for even a day, and a line from him the day before had told her how deeply he felt this disappointment.

It had been a long, sad winter and spring for her. The terrible battles of Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville had filled her soul with horror and her heart with an anguished dread. How could she hope that Rex had escaped where thousands had fallen!

But sad as it had all been, the sorrow in her heart at this moment was that it would so soon be ended. In two days Commencement would be over, and then she would leave Bellaire, perhaps never to return. Times had grown harder still with the old college,

and it had been decided that Lucy should undertake the education of the younger children, and Eunice had found a position near her own home. Lucy had grown to seem to her as a dear sister, and Dr. and Mrs. Charlton had treated her as a loved daughter; it was not possible to sever these dear ties and to leave the place so full of associations with Rex without the keenest sorrow and regret.

It was Wednesday of Commencement Week. There remained but the alumni exercises of this evening and the graduating exercises of the next day. All through the week there had been persistent rumors of the advance of Lee's army up the Valley; but Dr. Charlton, true to his Spartan principles, would listen to no suggestions of dismissing the college at once without waiting for the Commencement exercises.

"No," he said; "we will go on doing the duty that lies nearest. It will be time enough to run when the foe is in sight."

It was half-past seven of this glorious June evening. The sun had not yet set, and Eunice stood among the roses watching the shadows lengthen on the grass. She could see, through the gate in the hedge, the long line of students and alumni forming in a procession, with the barracks band at their head. Marshals, with batons tied with floating white ribbons, were hurrying back and forth, driving the stragglers into line and arranging and rearranging the order of the procession. Dr. Charlton and a group of distinguished visitors with him were standing a little at one side, waiting to take their places at the head of the line.

Mrs. Charlton was watching it, too, from the veranda with the wives of the distinguished visitors who had come on with their husbands to attend the festivities. They were only waiting for the procession to get well started when they would follow on down to the Commencement hall. Baby Ned was in bed, but Millie and the two younger boys were to stay up to see the procession start, and they were hovering between the veranda and the gate in the hedge, in eager expectancy at every blare of the trumpets as, one after another, the members of the band tried their instruments. Lucy, with two or three girl guests up for Commencement Week from Baltimore, had gone on before with Henry Sydney, who, almost eighteen now, had developed a liking for his sister's girl-friends and felt himself quite old enough to act as their escort. George Edgar, who scorned girls, was with Charles Cook, junior, hanging around the procession, fondly hoping to be permitted to come in at the tail-end and march to those soul-stirring strains of martial music. Suddenly Mrs. Charlton called to Eunice: "Eunice, come here, please—quick!" and as Eunice ran lightly up the veranda steps to her side, she exclaimed excitedly:

"See! What do you suppose is happening?"

Eunice looked, but could not understand. A soldier from the barracks had just ridden into the campus and delivered a note to Dr. Charlton. The doctor had glanced at it hastily, and then stepping quickly in front of the line, had silenced the preliminary strains of the band with uplifted hand, and

was evidently speaking to the procession. His resonant tones could be heard from where they sat, but not his words. It was a time when the slightest incident out of the ordinary was alarming, and a message from the barracks was very much out of the ordinary. Eunice and Mrs. Charlton and the little company of guests sat with strained and painful attention, as if they were listening to the doctor's words.

But if they could not hear his words, they could see the startling effect they produced. The band marched off alone at double-quick down the Iron Gate path, the procession dissolved as if by magic, the black figures of the students and visitors flying in every direction and calling to each other all sorts of hoarse and unintelligible directions. The doctor and his group of dignified guests were hurrying in long strides toward Mrs. Charlton's veranda, but George Edgar and Charles Cook, junior, were flying far before them.

"The rebels, mother; the rebels!" shouted George Edgar as soon as he came within ear-shot of Mrs. Charlton; and "Der rebels, mammy; der rebels is comin'!" echoed Charles Cook, junior, flying to Alcinda, who had come out on the lawn at the sounds of excitement.

Mrs. Charlton turned pale, and her guests started up in dismay, ready to flee at once. Eunice's heart stood still. There had been many false alarms; could it be possible they were coming at last, and would Rex be with them? She could not tell whether it was fear

or hope that made her heart stand still and then pound so violently. But there was no question with the others. Millie and the little boys were clinging close to their mother in terrified silence, while the visitors were uttering shrill and excited exclamations. Mrs. Charlton was trying to assure them that there could be no immediate danger, and that Dr. Charlton and their husbands would be there in a moment to tell them the truth of the matter.

The doctor had only lingered to despatch a messenger to the hall to announce to the waiting audience that there would be no exercises, and he was not far behind George Edgar.

"Well, my love," he said, as he mounted the steps with his long stride,"Major Barton sends me word that a special train will leave at eleven o'clock to carry away the officers and soldiers from the barracks. He offers to take any of our students who wish to go, and our visitors and ourselves. It will be the last train out of Bellaire; Lee's army is only twenty miles away."

They had listened breathlessly to him so far, but at his last words the women broke out once more into excited cries, begging him to tell them if they could surely get away, and could they take their trunks? Yes; in that one moment in which he had lingered he seemed to have arranged for everything. "Judge" would be over with his wheel-barrow as soon as he returned from his message to the waiting audience. It was not eight o'clock, and the train would not leave until eleven, but they had better get their trunks

packed as quickly as possible, for in the rush to get away on the only train there would, no doubt, be overcrowding, and those first at the station would stand the best chance of getting themselves and their baggage aboard.

Never was a little household in greater panic. Lucy's friends must be brought home at once, since they must be ready to leave also on the special train, and George Edgar was sent in quest of them. Each frantic woman seized her husband and hurried him away to help with her packing. Mrs. Charlton started to follow.

"Come, Robert," she said to her husband; and then something in his face made her stop and question:

"Are we not to go?"

"Yes," he answered; "I think it is wise for you and the children. You can go to Sister Sarah's in New York, and stay until the trouble is over."

"But you?" she asked, bewildered.

"I cannot leave, Millicent," he answered gently. "I must stay and take care of the college property."

"Then we stay with you," she responded just as gently, but with a firmness that the doctor knew from the start it was useless to combat, though he could not resist making one plea for the children, hoping thereby to move her.

"No," she reiterated; "our place is with you"; and then she added with a lightness she did not feel, "I do not believe there will be any danger in staying; and the boys, at least, would be terribly disappointed to lose their chance of seeing the 'rebels.'"

The doctor's radiant smile, grateful, appreciative, comprehending, more than repaid her if she was making any sacrifice. He had been honestly anxious to have her go with the others to a place of safety, but when he found it was impossible to persuade her he was openly joyous at this new proof of her devotion.

"Millicent," he said, with his adoring look, "you should have been the wife of a hero!"

"I am," she answered softly; and then they both remembered Eunice with a start. For a moment they had forgotten her; now Mrs. Charlton said:

"My dear, you must make haste; you have more packing than the others, and you will not be ready. But do not try to do it all. Just pack one trunk with the things you need most, and we will send you the rest later."

"I am not going," said Eunice, mildly.

"Not going!" ejaculated Dr. and Mrs. Charlton in a breath; and Mrs. Charlton added, "But, my dear, you must! Think of your family, how terrified they will be about you!"

"Yes," said the doctor; "I think you will have to go, my dear Miss Eunice. I am responsible to your father for your safety, and he would have a right to call me to account if I permitted you to stay."

Eunice listened to them both with that little tilt of her chin that made the doctor's heart fail within him. He had learned to know that that almost imperceptible tilt denoted, if not obstinacy, at least a

firmness that was adamant. Eunice was still silent, and he ventured once more:

"You know, do you not, that nothing could be sweeter to us than to have you share with us the dangers of the next few weeks as you have shared the privations of the last year. But your first duty is to your father and your family, and I think you must go, my child."

At his last words Eunice turned to him quickly and passionately, and with an abandon in voice and gesture they had never seen before.

"Oh, let me stay with you, dear Dr. Charlton—dear, dear Mrs. Charlton!" she cried; "I cannot go away and leave you. I will write to them and send by the train leaving to-night, so they will know why I stay, and know that you are not at all responsible." And then she added, with the little twinkle of humor in her eye that was always irresistible to the doctor:

"I will tell my father that I could not make up my mind to miss this opportunity of seeing something of the war. That will appeal to him, and he will be envying me instead of mourning for me."

There was no gainsaying her, and while Dr. and Mrs. Charlton were genuinely concerned lest they were being very unwise in allowing her to remain, they recognized their helplessness and rejoiced that they might with a good conscience permit themselves to be glad that she was not to leave them for a while.

That was a night long to be remembered in the old town. Pandemonium had broken loose in the college; the deafening clatter of pounding and hammering,

dragging heavy boxes and trunks about, bumping them down uncarpeted stairs, excited and loud demands for hammers and nails, vain calling on all the janitors by name, mingled with much good-natured joking and even an occasional snatch of song.

By ten o'clock most of the packing seemed to be finished, and the long line of wheel-barrows, piled high with trunks and boxes, had started for the train. At the president's house "Judge" and Charles Cook, junior, had, between them, wheeled to the train the dozen trunks that were leaving that evening. It was a grand frolic to the young people; the hurried packing of the girls, the young men eager with proffers of service, locking trunks that refused to go shut and then carrying them down-stairs with jest and laughter and much bandying of youthful wit. They were all going off together on the special train—well chaperoned, to be sure; but the midnight ride was in the nature of a grand lark, and they were loud in their regrets that Lucy was not to go with them.

To the confusion and bustle of getting ready there succeeded an hour of comparative quiet when work was over and there was nothing to do but wait,—an hour of feverish impatience to the older people, to whose exaggerated fears every sound was the tramp of the vanguard of the invading army. But to many young hearts in the old town that last hour was a sad one. All over the town, officers and students were making their farewell calls on those to whom it was hardest to say farewell. In many an old garden

where the moon threw deepest shadows under spreading trees, or on shady, quiet streets, or in secluded nooks of the beautiful campus, remote from the noise and confusion, ardent vows were whispered and tears dimmed bright eyes, and hand sought hand in last and tenderest clasp.

Promptly at eleven o'clock, the long train, reaching almost to the campus gates, pulled up in front of the Mansion House; but so great were the piles of trunks and boxes to be loaded on the three baggage-cars that it was midnight before the last good-bys were said and the train steamed slowly down "Main Street," every platform crowded with young men frantically waving hats and handkerchiefs, each one with his last, lingering look fixed on some girlish figure standing lonely under the flaring gas-jets of the station and tearfully waving a farewell for him alone.

A great sense of loneliness and dreariness fell on the doctor's little party as they turned their faces homeward through the moonlight and the shadows. They were all there but Eunice and Baby Ned. Baby Ned was asleep, and Eunice had begged to be allowed to stay with him while the others accompanied their guests to the train. The children were so wildly excited that to have tried to force them to bed would have seemed cruelty, and now Millie voiced the general sadness by breaking into irrepressible sobs.

"Why, what is it, darling?" asked her mother, almost inclined to be amused, and yet a little touched that the child should have taken these partings so seriously.

"Oh, I can't bear to have Alcinda and Cindie and Charles Cook, junior, go away," sobbed the child.

"But they are coming back," said Mrs. Charlton, soothingly. "Father thought it was not quite safe for them here,—they 're 'contraband,' you know,—and so they are going to stay at Aunt Sarah's until these troubles are over—and we don't think that will be very long."

But though Millie tried to stifle her sobs, she still wept on silently, for she knew they would never come back. In the shadow of a great pile of trunks at the station, Alcinda had taken her in her arms and said in her mournful negro tones:

"God bress yer sweet face, honey! I dunno 's I 'll ever see it ag'in. Don' tell yer mother, chile; but I think ole Alcindy 'll stay Norf when she gits there. I 'm shore 'nuff tired o' runnin' away from the 'fed'rates. This is the third time now, and three times is out. Good-by, honey, an' *don'* you forget ole Alcindy."

CHAPTER XXII

DR. CHARLTON'S STRATAGEM

AFTER the panic and excitement of Wednesday night, the old town settled itself down to two days of dreary waiting, with not even the passing of trains to relieve the monotony, since, as Major Barton had said, that midnight special was the last train out of Bellaire. Nothing more stirring happened than the passing of the almost continuous droves of horses and cattle driven northward along the Henrysburg turnpike, which led directly through Main Street. The farmers all reported Lee's army close behind them, but they were in such a state of panic that their reports could hardly be considered trustworthy, and Dr. Charlton began to hope that they might escape, after all. Twice before had Lee threatened them, but both times his army had been driven back before it reached Bellaire; perhaps they would escape again, and the older members of the family began to settle down to the routine of daily living with a greater feeling of security.

It was a routine varied by some hard and unusual labor, for, with Alcinda and her family gone, they had to take upon themselves the unaccustomed duties

of cooking and dish-washing. It might have proved drudgery but that they were all making a grand frolic of it, and Mrs. Charlton had so skilfully allotted, even to the youngest child, some special department, that many hands were making light work.

Late Friday afternoon, the monotony of waiting was broken by a new ripple of excitement. A company of Buford's cavalry, which was to the Northern army what Stuart's was to the Southern, dashed into the west end of town, and seeing the inviting green of the campus, wheeled their horses on to the soft turf and picketed them for a little rest and feeding and watering.

They brought exciting news. Yes, there was no doubt of it: Lee's whole army was just behind them. This was no raid for securing horses and provisions, but an invasion for conquest. One old trooper who was busily telling marvelous tales of the ferocity of the "rebs" to Henry Sidney and George Edgar, while he curried and fed his horse, noting their wide-eyed horror, wound up by saying:

"Yes, sirs, by to-morrow at this time you 'll be citizens of the Southern Confederacy. You 'll be no better than Johnny Rebs yourselves."

"Never!" the two young patriots declared in concert, and George Edgar added:

"I 'll run away and join Buford's cavalry first."

The trooper laughed, and might have gone on with his teasing speeches but that the bugle sounded, "Boots and saddles!" and, so quickly that it made George Edgar wink, the soldier had his saddle once

more on his horse, and himself on its back. As he wheeled into line with the others, he waved his hand to the boys and called:

"Good-by, Johnny! If you see any of the rebs, tell 'em we 've gone to Henrysburg."

The indignity of being called "Johnny" was greatly softened to George Edgar by the importance of this commission.

"Do you s'pose he re'ly wants us to?" he asked Henry Sidney, eagerly.

"Naw!" replied Henry Sidney, laconically, with his air of superior wisdom that always greatly nettled his younger brother. "Of course not! he 's probably going just the other way."

"Then," said George Edgar, with decision, "I shall do exactly as he said: I shall tell the rebs they 're gone to Henrysburg, and that will throw them off the track."

It was Henry Sidney's turn to look crestfallen, for he could not but recognize the good sense in his brother's plan, and to have been so stupid as not to have thought of it himself was really quite mortifying.

Buford's cavalry had not allowed themselves more than half an hour for rest, and their evident haste and their exciting news—for up to this time no one had felt quite sure that it was to be anything more than a raid—threw the town into consternation again.

Sitting on the veranda with his family about him after supper, the doctor tried to lead the talk into less exciting channels; for fear was working on the

imaginations of the younger members of the family until going to bed in the dark was not to be thought of. Long beyond their usual bed-hour they were allowed to sit out on the cool veranda under a fretwork of shadows where the moonlight found its way between the leaves of the great linden.

Never had the doctor exerted himself more to be entertaining. He told his best stories, and his little audience laughed appreciatively and then veered back immediately to the one great topic. Try as he might, he could not keep them away from it; and try as he might, he could not keep his own heart from feeling a haunting dread of what the morrow was to bring forth: a dread as much greater than the dread of the others as his knowledge of the wickedness of the world was wider.

Saturday morning brought a new excitement: Charles Ernest and Theodore Howard had disappeared! The "Big Boys" and Millie searched in every one of their known haunts, but could find no trace of them. The only clew, and that did not throw much light on the disappearance, was some broken pieces of bread and butter on the kitchen table—evidently the remains of an early breakfast. They had often taken an early breakfast when they were going off on a fishing-trip or some other expedition of importance, but never without their mother's permission. Dr. Charlton began to grow exceedingly anxious. If they had gone on a fishing expedition now, it was more than likely they would fall into the hands of the Confederates; he was for instituting

a searching party at once. But Mrs. Charlton was more philosophical.

"No," she said, "we 'll not worry for a while. They 're smart little fellows, and I 'm quite sure they 'll turn up all right." And whatever anxieties disturbed her motherly heart, she had her family sit down quietly, and as usual, to their breakfast.

And her confidence was not misplaced. In the middle of the meal in walked the two little fellows, dusty, tired, and hungry, but quite unabashed at the fusillade of excited greetings and reprimands that met them at the threshold.

"Me 'n' Charlie 's been 'k'noitering!" announced Theodore Howard, proudly.

Military terms were pathetically at home on his baby lips, his mother thought wistfully; and if he was not quite equal to the pronunciation, he understood their meaning perfectly. Eight-year-old Charlie corroborated his younger brother gravely.

"Yes, ma'am," he said; "we 've been to Meeting House Springs and we 've seen the rebels."

Meeting House Springs was two miles in the country; that meant a four-mile tramp for the little fellows before breakfast, and that fact was the one over which Mrs. Charlton felt the most concern as she exclaimed in dismay, "Meeting House Springs!" But it made no impression on the others at the table, it was so overshadowed by the astounding intelligence the little fellows had brought.

"Seen the rebels!" the family chorused.

Charlie nodded gravely and Theodore eagerly. No

one believed them, it seemed so improbable that two babies should announce the long-looked-for approach.

"Yes, 'm," insisted Charles Ernest, firmly; "and they 're most here. Dorie and I want some more breakfast, and then we 're going down to the corner to see them come in."

Their faith in their own tidings was contagious. The two boys were hurried through their breakfast by their eager brothers and sisters, and then sent to keep watch at the Iron Gate corner while the older members of the family despatched the morning's work. And before they were through with it, Charles Ernest came flying back.

"They 're coming! they 're coming!" he shouted, and without waiting to see how his tidings were received, tore back again to his post of observation.

Millie was drying her last tea-cup, Henry Sidney was not quite through bringing in kindling and coal, and George Edgar was in the midst of sweeping the veranda and steps; but tea-towel, coal-scuttle, and broom were all discarded with equal haste, and lay where they fell, as the three flew down the long pavement toward the Iron Gate, Millie well in the lead.

"I think we ought to go, too, Robert, to look after the children," said Mrs. Charlton, questioningly.

But there was something besides her mother's anxiety in her eyes, and her husband remembered that there might easily be a cousin or a childhood's friend among the invading foe.

"Come," he said with ready sympathy; "put on your bonnet and we 'll go down to the Iron Gate;

I 'll watch the children, and you can watch the soldiers."

Eunice and Lucy, finding that Dr. and Mrs. Charlton were going, would not be left behind. Eunice had been longing and dreading to go, but had not dared give expression to her desire; Lucy was frankly afraid and frankly eager to see the Southern soldiers, and proposed that they two should take with them four-year-old Ned, who was at the wilful age when he needed two guardians for perfect security, and whose baby beauty, Lucy was quite sure, would touch the most ferocious soldier's heart, should he be inclined to use sword or gun.

Lucy had a very vague but also a very fearful idea as to how this army was going to make its entry. She had read much of the blood-curdling rebel yell, and she fancied there would be charging through the streets, hideous yells, sabers drawn, perhaps recklessly fired carbines. She felt that she and Eunice were taking their lives in their hands, going down to the Iron Gate corner; but since her father and mother and brothers were all there, if they were to die she wanted to die with them. Eunice had no such fears. To her the Southern army was an army of Rexes, and she could not associate with them anything but the most chivalrous treatment of women and children.

But neither of them was quite prepared for what they actually saw. The curb was lined with men, women, and children, all silently watching a slowly approaching column of soldiers. Neighbor elbowed neighbor, and friend elbowed friend, but not a word

was spoken. All were listening to the ominous sound of the heavy blows of axes on telegraph poles and the dull boom of the poles as they fell to the earth. Slowly the column approached, a double line of cavalry guarding a corps of miners and sappers who were tearing up the railroad and cutting down the telegraph poles. Dr. Charlton, watching them, felt with a great sinking of the heart, as he saw all communication with the North by either wire or train effectually cut off, that they were indeed captives at the mercy of a foe whom the Northern papers had constantly represented as fierce and unscrupulous. And what most startled and alarmed him was the ominous silence with which this work of destruction was accomplished. In all that mass of men, filling the wide street from curb to curb, not a word was spoken. Apparently not even an order was given, the cavalry riding slowly with grimly set faces and eyes keenly alert for any lurking foe; the men with the axes intent only on delivering sturdy and telling blows. Dr. Charlton watched them a long time, and then he turned to his wife and whispered:

"These men feel that they are riding into a trap—look at their faces!" She only nodded in reply, but there was in her eyes more pity than elation for the men whom she, too, feared were marching to their doom.

Only once was that ominous silence of soldiers and citizens broken. Charles Ernest, standing at the very edge of the curb and wearing a straw hat so wide as almost to hide his little figure, was indignant at

the destruction of the telegraph poles. When the men began on the one by which he was standing, it was more than he could endure.

"Stop that!" he cried in his shrill voice. "Stop, I tell you!" and then looking up into the face of the cavalryman riding by the sapper's side, he demanded fearlessly:

"Mister, tell that man to stop cutting down our poles!"

Involuntarily the cavalryman checked his horse, and in so doing stopped the advance of the whole Southern army; for this was Jenkins's cavalry, and it was General Jenkins himself that Charles Ernest had so fearlessly addressed.

The commander looked down wonderingly at the little wisp of humanity, hardly visible under his wide hat, that had held at bay an invading army. And then he laughed.

"Hat, what are you doing with that boy?" he said, and added good-naturedly:

"Sonny, come out from under that hat and let 's have a look at you."

It relieved the tension for a moment. There was a roar of laughter from his own men, and an answering shout from the citizens on the curb. Conquerors and conquered were on better terms with each other for the time, and the vanguard of the Confederate army went forward with a little lightening of that dread that they were marching into a trap prepared for them in the heart of the enemy's country.

As for Charles Ernest, he was greatly abashed by

the laugh, which sounded to him like ridicule, and he shrank back to his father's side and took hold of his father's reassuring hand. Dr. Charlton felt half of his fears removed, and Lucy's were gone altogether. Both father and daughter felt there was little to dread from a bold commander who spoke so kindly to a courageous child, and from his men who laughed with him so good-naturedly.

What Eunice was feeling while she listened to the dull ring of the axes and the soft pad of horses' hoofs on the unpaved street, it would have been difficult for her to tell. Her first conscious impression was one of keen disappointment. She had seen many soldiers during the war, all wearing the trim blue and gold of the Union troops. Buford's cavalry had had all the dash and glitter one naturally expects in cavalry, but these men were ragged and rough-looking, grimy with the dust of the road, unshaven and unshorn, with no pretense of being in uniform. Battered old hats, and coats of every cut and color and texture, made them a motley-looking crew. She had been picturing to herself Rex in a dapper suit of gray with much gold lace, and a fine military hat with perhaps a drooping plume like some old Vandyke cavalier. Could it be possible he looked like these men? She refused to believe it of the exquisite Rex.

And then, as she looked longer, something in the grimly set faces and the stern and dauntless eyes stirred her strangely. These men had known great suffering and great privations; their faces told the tale. And they were brave and devoted beyond her

dreams of men; their whole bearing proved that. Had Rex, for whose vanity and moral weakness and luxurious habits she had sometimes felt scorn, become like these men? Her heart glowed within her at the thought. Rebel or loyal, how could she not admire and honor and love a man like one of these!

All day long that great army of invasion poured silently through the streets of Bellaire. There had been an interim of nearly an hour, after the vanguard had passed on, before the infantry began to arrive; but from that time until almost six o'clock they marched steadily down Main Street in solid phalanx, hundreds of them, thousands of them; company after company, regiment after regiment, brigade after brigade, division after division—the whole of Ewell's corps.

It was almost six o'clock when the last brigade of Rode's division was ordered to break ranks at the campus gates. With a yell that was one of joy, not defiance, the weary, way-worn fellows rushed through gates and stiles and threw themselves at full length on the cool, soft turf. Many of them were hatless, very many of them shoeless and limping, though occasionally a barefooted fellow carried, slung over his arm, a pair of brand-new shoes, looted from some village store, but too new to be ventured on for a long day's march. Almost every man also carried under his arm some dainty taken from the farm-wives along the road and intended for his evening meal: a jar of apple-butter, loaves of freshly baked bread, buckets filled with pats of fresh butter or with newly laid

eggs, a country-cured ham, or a brace of squawking chickens. Death might lie lurking in their pathway, but they had the immediate prospect before them of one delicious and sufficient meal, and that was no mean prospect to men coming up to this land of abundance, half starved, from the waste and war-devastated fields of Virginia.

Half an hour they gave themselves for absolute rest at length on the grass, and then arose the joyous din of preparations for supper and for the night. Here and there a tent was pitched for an officer, but for the rank and file the only preparation for slumber was to wrap themselves in a blanket, and all their attention could be given to the feast. In a few minutes smoke was rising from hundreds of camp-fires and the aroma of boiling coffee and frying ham and eggs was filling the air.

Close beside the little gate in the hedge that led from the campus into the president's private grounds were pitched the tents of the commander of the brigade and his staff. Young Colonel Morris was the acting brigadier, and it disturbed him greatly that in the family watching eagerly from the veranda steps all the movements of this army encamped on their beloved campus should be two young and beautiful ladies. The brave officer had been too long in the field not to feel abashed in their presence, and he had a plan in his mind that required his facing them boldly.

One would hardly have supposed it to be one of the boldest officers in Rode's division who presented himself modestly at the foot of the veranda steps and called

Dr. Charlton aside for a private consultation. But if his manner was modest, his demands were not; they were that supper should be prepared as quickly as possible in the president's house for himself and his staff, nearly a dozen men in all.

The doctor tried to demur, but the colonel's manner quickly convinced him that there could be no questioning the commands of a conqueror, and unwillingly he went back to his family and delivered the unwelcome message.

Mrs. Charlton showed her dismay in a quick exclamation:

"Why, Robert! it is n't possible! How can we cook for a dozen men? And how will we find enough for them to eat? There are no stores open, and nothing in them if there were: everything has been carried off to Henrysburg. I laid in provisions that I thought would last a week, but if we give them to these Southerners, I am afraid the children will go hungry."

Fiery little Lucy blazed with indignation:

"Cook for rebels? Never! Is that what the colonel wanted? And I thought him so good-looking and so gentlemanly!"

But there was no help for it; the colonel's commands must be obeyed, and it was Eunice who proved herself a tower of strength in this emergency. She had been well trained in the domestic arts in her thrifty New England home, and she took upon herself the office of cook. Daintily and deftly she mixed biscuit, made coffee, and tossed omelets, while rebellious Lucy and

equally indignant Millie and the boys were set to do the waiting. Eunice and Mrs. Charlton were both taking a certain pride in this supper, Eunice feeling that she was doing it for Rex, and Mrs. Charlton anxious that her hospitality, even if enforced, should do credit to her Northern home in the eyes of her Southern compatriots. Her table was as carefully set as if for invited guests; she did not spare her silver or china or pickles, and Charles Ernest and Theodore Marvin were sent to gather luscious raspberries from the garden to be served with a light cake she herself had made with the swiftness of execution natural to her. The doctor was amazed when he saw the elaborate supper she had prepared.

"Why, my dear!" he exclaimed. "Why have you made yourself such trouble!"

Mrs. Charlton colored a little and laughed:

"I 'm sure I don't know, but I think it must be because I'm so *proud.*"

Not in many months had the rough soldiers that gathered round her table sat down to such a meal, and their eyes glistened as they saw the snowy linen and shining glass and silver. There was a moment of awkward silence after they were all seated, and then the colonel turned to Dr. Charlton, standing anxiously near the door, not quite certain how these rough men would treat his young daughters.

"Doctor," said the colonel, hesitatingly, "will you ask the blessing for us?"

The doctor was greatly taken by surprise. He had heard much of the religious spirit in the Army of

Northern Virginia, but he was not prepared to find it extended to the simple duties of every day. And how could he ask a blessing on the food to be taken by his enemies? Would not the prophets of old rather have called down curses?

For a moment he was nonplussed. Then clearly and distinctly to his spiritual hearing came his Master's command, "Love your enemies." He lifted his hand, and while the rough heads around the shining table were reverently bowed he prayed that the Lord would bless the food of which they were about to partake, and that he would open their eyes to the sinfulness of their present course and bring them back to loyalty to their country and their country's flag.

Colonel Morris's eyes twinkled as he lifted his head.

"Don't you think, doctor," he said genially, "that you were taking an unfair advantage of us? Were n't you rather talking at us instead of to the Lord?"

The doctor had to own to the impeachment, and the ice was broken. To the amazement of Lucy and the younger children, the doctor was soon in a spirited but thoroughly good-humored argument with the enemy. Only the superior officers engaged in it; the younger ones sat silent, absorbed in the delicacies of the table or in furtively watching Lucy's golden curls and dainty, scornful airs; for Lucy could not quite deny herself this luxury—if she must serve her foes, she would show them that she did not do it willingly.

Mrs. Charlton had builded better than she knew. The elegance and bounty of her table had had its

effect, and if the officers had been inclined to be rude, they could not have had the presumption in the face of such courteous hospitality. Its most immediate effect was the colonel's speech as he rose from the table.

"Dr. Charlton," he said, "I will have a sentry stationed in your grounds immediately, that you and your family may feel perfectly secure during the night and as long as we stay. It is General Lee's most explicit command," he added, "that families and homes shall not be molested; but we cannot always be responsible for the lawless acts of prowlers and stragglers, and so I will see that you are properly protected. You may dismiss all fears for yourselves and your property."

It was said with such an air of high-bred courtesy that it quite won the impressionable heart of Lucy, and lifted a great load of anxiety from Dr. Charlton.

True to his word, the colonel had hardly been gone ten minutes before a boyish sentinel, in home-made clothes dyed with butternuts, was pacing back and forth before the doctor's door. "Butternuts" the children dubbed him at once, and it was not long before they had made great friends with him. He made a conquest of Millie that very evening. The children had worked faithfully, setting the table, waiting on it, clearing it afterward, and getting the dining-room in order; and now Mrs. Charlton, wanting them to have a little of the lovely evening before bedtime should come, told them to run out in the garden for a while and the older ones would do the dishes.

Just below where the sentry was pacing, at the foot of a little green slope, was a favorite cherry-tree. They were late blackhearts, and the branches were still loaded with the ripe fruit. It was the season of long June twilights, and although supper had been late it was not yet dark. Climbing was as easy to Millie and Charles Ernest and Dorie as to squirrels, and the cherries were tempting. In a moment they were all three up in the tree, Millie, with some unconscious feeling of shyness, having waited until the sentry's back was turned. Once safely hidden by the thick foliage of the tree, the three children grew very bold.

"I dare you to sing, 'Hang Jeff Davis,'" said Charlie to Millie.

Millie, like most gentle creatures, had a touch of audacity in her nature, and instantly her clear childish treble rang out:

"We 'll hang Jeff Davis on a sour apple-tree,
We 'll hang Jeff Davis on a sour apple-tree,
While we go marching on!"

Through the first stanza the sentry paced steadily on, an amused smile in his blue eyes; but when Millie, growing bolder, began it all over again in still shriller tones, he stepped to the brow of the hill and raised his gun.

"Come down out of that tree or I 'll shoot!" he called.

There was a swift scramble of the two boys, who

dropped to the ground like nuts in October and scurried away in the twilight to a safe hiding-place. Millie came down more slowly and with great dignity. She did not believe he would shoot, and if he did, would that not be dying for one's country, and could anything be more glorious?

But from that hour she and "Butternuts" were devoted friends. There were often other sentries on duty, but when it was "Butternuts' " turn Millie was sure to be not far away. Her heart had been won as the Zulu chieftain wins the heart of his bride, and who can say there is not always something of the simple savage nature in the eternal feminine?

It was a long, hard evening's work for Mrs. Charlton and Eunice and Lucy. When ten o'clock came and Mrs. Charlton and the two girls, looking white and worn, were still drudging in the hot kitchen, Dr. Charlton rebelled. He had tried his best to help them, but the clever scholar was awkward enough at household tasks and only succeeded in being more of a hindrance than a help. When, at last, every piece of silver and china and glass was in its place for the night and the kitchen made neat for the morning, he called a council of war while the three tired women sat out on the cool veranda for a little rest.

All was quiet on the campus. Except for the occasional flicker of a smoldering camp-fire and the gleam of the scattered white tents in the moonlight, no one would have guessed that an army lay sleeping at their door. Just below them the faithful "Butternuts" paced back and forth, but so soft were his footfalls

on the deep turf that but for the gleam of a moonbeam on his bayonet they might have forgotten his presence. Since he was so near, it behooved them to speak low, and in whispers the doctor unfolded his plan.

"Delightful!" whispered Lucy, ecstatically; but Eunice was a little doubtful, and Mrs Charlton murmured:

"Oh, Robert, I am afraid! What if it should get you into trouble!"

But the doctor had no fears, and the next morning at eight o'clock saw the little family assembled upstairs in "mother's room," making a picnic breakfast of cold meat and bread and butter. Every shutter was bowed, and they were all moving about on tiptoe and speaking in whispers; even Baby Ned catching the infection from the others, and distorting his sweet baby face in his efforts to "whisper loud," and tumbling over on his little snub nose whenever he tried to walk around on the tips of his baby toes. The effect, to one looking at the house from the outside, was of a family still buried in a late Sunday-morning sleep.

Now the last words of the colonel the evening before had been, "We will be in to breakfast at eight o'clock in the morning." A little before eight, therefore, one of the boys, "peeking" through the half-turned slats, reported the colonel as brushing his hair and beard before a little glass hung on the outside of his tent. A moment later the same outlook reported him as gazing anxiously up at the closed shutters. From time

to time, through the progress of their own breakfast, one after another stole to the window and announced new developments. Now the whole staff had gathered before the colonel's tent and were evidently discussing the situation. Now they had advanced in a body as far as the little gate in the hedge. They had stopped there to hold another consultation. One of the younger officers had gone forward to interview the sentinel. He had returned and evidently reported no one stirring and dining-room windows and all the lower windows tightly closed and barred. The staff were retreating in a body to the colonel's tent. They were hanging around disconsolately, with many longing glances directed toward the bowed shutters. At length the colonel boldly determines on reconnoitering alone. He passes through the little gate in the hedge and walks up and down with his heaviest tread directly beneath the windows. No results. He retreats to his tent for meditation.

By this time it is ten o'clock. Never have the Charlton children been in greater glee. Father's stratagem is working to a dot. They have stolen to the window every minute to report progress, and as often retired in side-splitting but silent hysterics at the colonel's evident mystification. But at last the colonel has made up his mind. He calls his staff around him and explains his line of action, and once more boldly passes through the little gate and, though it must be confessed with slow and hesitating steps, mounts the stairs to the front door and rings the bell.

The watchers at the window have reported every

step of his progress, and now at his timid and deprecating ring they are ready to shriek with delight, though Mrs. Charlton looks faintly troubled; she is not quite sure how it will all end. Dr. Charlton starts to answer the bell, but the daring Lucy interposes:

"Oh, wait, father, till he rings again. That was so faint we can pretend we did n't hear it." And George Edgar and Henry Sidney indorse her in energetic whispers:

"Oh, yes, father; make him wait as long as you can."

But at the colonel's second and bolder ring, Dr. Charlton goes down and opens the door, and with great dignity bids the colonel good morning. Something in the doctor's aspect makes the colonel feel like a trembling school-boy, and though the authority is on his side, he makes his demands for breakfast for himself and staff in mildest fashion. With stately courtesy the doctor invites him into the long, cool parlors and lays the case before him. His servants have fled in fear of being confiscated. His wife and daughters are unaccustomed to such toil and unable to endure it. They have no provisions for feeding such a company and no means of procuring them. The colonel has his servants with him, and at this moment his men are making a great storehouse of the whole "back campus": droves of oxen are being slaughtered there, hundreds of barrels of flour are being dumped, and all kinds of provisions are arriving every moment. The colonel shall furnish his own servants and his own provisions, and Mrs. Charlton

will allow him to use her kitchen and its utensils and her dining-room and dishes.

No arrangement could have been proposed more satisfactory to the colonel, and he hurries away to send in his servants with provisions that their long-delayed breakfast may be over before the hour for morning service.

But at the threshold he stops and turns to the doctor again.

"Dr. Charlton," he says with hesitating grace, blushing even through the deep brown of summer suns and winter winds, "I would like to ask you a favor. Will you say to Mrs. Charlton that if she does not mind sitting at table with 'rebels,' we would be very glad to have you and your family take your meals with us. My servants can as well do your work also, since we have driven yours away."

And the doctor, confounded by such courtesy where he had feared rudeness, could only falter:

"I thank you, Colonel Morris; I will deliver your invitation to my wife and daughters. It will be for them to decide; but whatever their decision may be, believe me, we will all appreciate most heartily the courtesy and generosity of the powerful to the powerless."

The colonel went his way, and the doctor turned and slowly mounted the stairs to his wife's room, pondering at every step the unexpected success of his stratagem.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE GENERAL'S AIDE

THE June twilight was fast deepening into night. The younger members of the Charlton family had been put to bed early, quite worn out with the excitement and late hours of the last few days. Dr. and Mrs. Charlton, Eunice and Lucy, were on the veranda, listening to the hymns rising from a thousand deep-throated singers.

The young colonel was a martinet where religion was concerned, and not a man that could be spared from duty was missing from that great semicircle of soldiers closely seated on the grass and joining fervently in the singing or listening patiently and immovably to the sermon no Southern preacher would venture to make less than two hours in length. The two older boys had begged to be allowed to join the congregation, and were seated on the skirts of the throng, with a devout air which was in unconscious imitation of the bearded men around them. Torches were flaring about the improvised pulpit, whose brilliant but unsteady light threw the strong faces in the front ranks into bold relief, but left the outer circles in dusk. The four on the veranda were thoroughly ap-

preciating the picturesque scene and joining reverently in the spirit of devotion.

"I have never known a sweeter or more peaceful Sabbath," said Mrs. Charlton, with a restful sigh.

They had accepted the colonel's invitation, Mrs. Charlton feeling that not to accept it in the same gracious spirit in which it was made would show themselves less high-toned and generous than their foe. At dinner and supper they had sat at table with these rough men, who were yet thorough gentlemen, and the colonel's negro servants had cooked their meals and waited on them with the effusive politeness native to the Southern darky; and now, in the quiet of the evening, Mrs. Charlton was feeling a delicious sense of repose born of the fact that no distasteful drudgeries had marred the Sabbath peace, and none awaited her on the morrow.

Dr. Charlton answered her little speech:

"It is wonderful! Ewell's whole corps encamped in our town, and Bellaire has never known a quieter Sunday!"

There was a little disturbance down at the big gate that led to the street. Two officers on horseback were trying to ride into the president's garden, and the sentry was preventing them. The officer in advance was a man whose hair and beard were fast turning white. He was dressed in an old suit of gray with the three stars of a colonel embroidered on the collar, and an old gray hat of soft felt was pulled down over kindly brown eyes in whose depths lurked the flash of the lightning. He was of splendid physique and was riding a magnificent horse.

As the sentinel refused them entrance, the younger officer tried to interpose; evidently he was about to tell the officious sentinel what high dignitary he was treating so summarily. But the older man prevented.

"No, no," he said hastily; "the man is quite right. He is here to protect private property, and we have no right to be riding over garden paths."

And then in a lower tone, as they turned their horses down the street toward the Iron Gate:

"You must not forget that I am trying to conceal my identity. I think you came very near betraying me to that private."

The younger man was abashed, and earnestly begged his superior's pardon. But he was also greatly disappointed. He had caught a glimpse of the white dresses on the veranda, and he had been ardently longing for a closer view of them.

They rode through the Iron Gate, where the countersign gave them ready entrance, and under a clump of trees dismounted and tied their horses, walked forward to the great congregation, and sat down on the outer circle. It was already growing dark there under the trees, and no one noticed them as they took their seats and pulled their hats still lower over their eyes.

The congregation was singing with swelling chorus,

"How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord!"

The two officers took no part in the singing until the last stanza, and then in a low voice, but with concentrated earnestness, the older man sang:

"The soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose,
I will not—I will not desert to his foes."

They bowed reverent heads through the long and fervid prayer, but when the preacher had announced his text and his congregation were settling themselves more comfortably for patient listening, the older man arose and beckoned the younger to follow him. He could not see the dismay in his subordinate's eyes, he did not know that for the second time he was intensely disappointed. The young officer had been nervous and restless through the hymn and the prayer, straining his eyes to catch a glimpse of the white dresses on the veranda. He had just decided that since he could leave his general safe among his soldiers, he must ask for a few minutes' leave of absence to call at the president's house. To have the summons that could not be disregarded come at that very moment was hard to bear. For the first time the young aide followed the great commander reluctantly.

As they moved off in the darkness toward their horses, the general threw his arm affectionately over his aide's shoulder.

"Rex," he said gravely, "I am greatly troubled. No word from Stuart yet—do you think anything can have happened to him?"

"Oh, I am sure not, sir," Rex answered, eager to quiet his general's anxieties. "Nothing ever happens to Stuart—he 'll turn up in a day or two."

"A day or two!" exclaimed the other, with unusual bitterness. "And I am perfectly in the dark as to

where Hooker or Hancock or Meade is. It is Stuart's duty to keep me informed. He has never failed me, and I fear some great disaster. Rex, I tell you we are walking into a trap! I must find out where the Army of the Potomac is by to-morrow night, or we are undone!"

Rex hesitated for the fraction of a second, and then he said quietly:

"And I will undertake to find it out for you, sir."

"You!" exclaimed his general, aghast for a moment. "You are no scout!"

"No, sir," returned Rex; "but I know this country well. I know the roads to York and Hanover, Baltimore and Washington. I am sure I can find out by to-morrow morning what the Army of the Potomac is doing, and you shall know by to-morrow night."

But the general would not listen at first.

"No," he said; "that is the duty of scouts. Not even a trained scout could ride through the enemy's country without every moment being in danger of his life. It is not your duty; they will take you for a spy. No, Rex; I could never look your mother in the face again if I sent her boy off on such an errand and he died a shameful death."

But Rex was on fire now with the idea of doing some great service for his idolized chief.

"Let me go, sir!" he begged. "If I lose my life, I could not lose it in a better cause; there is no way in which I could make it count for so much. But I shall not lose it; I shall be back to-morrow, and you shall know what you want to know."

They had reached their horses by this time, and Rex was eager to secure his general's permission and be off. He knew he had a long and hard ride before him and there was no time to be lost, yet he had in mind that he would take five minutes first and call at Dr. Charlton's house and learn what he could of Eunice. Leaning on their horses' necks in the deep shadow of the trees, they talked long and earnestly: Rex eager and impatient as he dared to be, the general doubtful, hesitating, and convinced against his will. And when he had yielded at last, there were still the arrangements to be talked over and a place of meeting to be decided upon, and by the time they were ready to mount their horses the sermon had ended, the congregation had broken up, and the campus had taken on the stillness of night and sleep.

Rex hoped there was still time for his call, but he must first see his commander safely to General Ewell's headquarters at the barracks, and every delay fretted him. His general would not let him come farther than the sentry at the gates of the barracks.

"I am perfectly safe now, Rex," he said; "and you must be off." And then leaning from his horse and taking Rex's hand in an iron grip, he said tenderly:

"Go, my son, and may your mother's God go with you and bring you back in safety!"

Rex was deeply touched; for a moment he could not answer, but he found his voice at last to say unsteadily:

"Good-by, Uncle Robert. If I do not come back, tell my mother good-by for me."

He wheeled his horse and dashed away in the moonlight. His general watched him until he disappeared in the shade of the avenue of lindens and maples, and then he lifted his face to the stars and took off his hat.

"O Lord God," he said reverently, "when will it all end? When can we keep our boys beside us, and not send them out to almost certain death! Keep him and bring him back to his mother!"

He was thinking of his own boys and their mother, and his heart, deeply touched by what seemed to him Rex's certain fate, was wrung for all the sorrowing mothers of the South.

Rex dashed blindly on for a few minutes, the mist in his eyes blurring the path before him. But it cleared away, and his impatience to see the Charltons returned with double force, driving out every keen pang at parting with his general.

It is only two blocks out of his way to the college; his good horse can cover that in a few minutes, and he will not stay more than five. He easily reconciles it with his conscience to take this flying visit on his way.

But when he arrives at the gate where he and his general were refused entrance, he looks up at the house with dismay to find the windows all darkened. Still he will not give up hope entirely. He dismounts and fastens his horse to the ring in the carriage-block, and the sentry challenging him at the gate, he gives the countersign. But it is the sentry's orders to admit

no one after ten o'clock, and all Rex's arguments and inducements are powerless to make him disobey orders. The sentinels have been changed since Rex was there before; it is the curly-headed, blue-eyed boy in butternuts that is on duty now, and Rex determines to throw himself upon his generosity. He asks him, first, if there is a young lady staying at Dr. Charlton's, not one of his daughters. "Butternuts" thinks there is. There are two young ladies and one little girl, and "Butternuts" believes the older young lady is not the president's daughter. Rex asks for a description of her, and cannot doubt the description belongs to Eunice, while he secretly swells with pride at the boy's account of her beauty. But the boy insists also that the family are all in bed; they have been abed for an hour, and on no account will he permit them to be disturbed. Then Rex begs him to let him enter the garden only so far as that white rose-bush shining in the moonlight. This the boy at last consents to do, and Rex gathers two roses from the very bush from which Eunice plucks one every day for her hair (though this he does not know), and he stands for a minute looking up at that window through whose bowed shutters she once dropped him a white rose. Is she there behind those shutters? Would she answer if he called her name? He is desperate. How can he go away without one look into her eyes and one touch of her hand!

But he has given his word of honor to go no farther than the rose-bush and time is passing; he must be

"'Tell her a friend in the Southern army sent it.'"

away on that commission that may well mean death to him. He goes slowly back to the boy.

"Sentinel," he says, "will you do something for a comrade who is starting on an expedition which is likely to cost him his life?"

"Gladly," says the boy, gravely; "though I think we are all on an expedition that is likely to cost us our lives."

Rex assents grimly, and then he says:

"Will you take this rose and to-morrow morning will you see that Miss Harlowe gets it? Be sure to remember the name—Miss Harlowe, the beautiful lady with the brown curls—and tell her a friend in the Southern army sent it to her?"

The boy promises faithfully, and Rex puts one of the two white roses in his hand, puts the other carefully away in his own breast-pocket, says, "Good-by, comrade," and is away in the night on his arduous task.

No one knows better than he how arduous it will be: threading dark and dangerous mountain passes, swimming deep rivers, making long detours to avoid scouting or skirmishing parties of the enemy, many weary miles to be traveled before the morning light will increase the dangers of his path, and liable at any moment to have his long journey ended by a bullet in his back.

As his horse springs forward at the touch of his spur, he turns in his saddle, waves his hand to the darkened window, and whispers:

"Good-by, Eunice!"

CHAPTER XXIV

MAJOR McALLISTER

THERE was great excitement in the Charlton household the next morning. It was a time of excitements; not a day passed that some news did not thrill the family to its innermost center. But none so far had stirred them quite so profoundly as this of the early Monday.

Millie was a child of the morning. She loved to be out in the dewy freshness of the new day, and she had run down this morning to have a chat with her "Butternuts"—as she was beginning to consider him—before breakfast. But she came running back in a moment and burst into her mother's room, wildly excited.

"Mother! mother!" she called before she had the door fairly open, "Cousin Rex has been here, I 'm sure!"

Mrs. Charlton turned pale and in her excitement she unconsciously spoke sharply:

"What do you mean, Millie?" she said, and then seeing Millie look abashed at the severity of her tone, she added gently:

"There, I did n't mean to scold, but you startled me, child."

Millie was holding in her hand a white rose, a little withered.

"Mother," she said, "some one sent this to Miss Eunice and said to tell her it was from a friend of hers in the Southern army. And 'Butternuts' says he was tall and had very dark eyes and black, curly hair; don't you think it must have been Cousin Rex?"

Mrs. Charlton thought without doubt it must have been. But that he should have been so near and not come to see them filled her with wonder and regret and the keenest pain for Eunice. She knew nothing of a white rose, but she knew it might easily have some special significance for Eunice, and she dreaded the effect the sudden announcement of Rex's nearness might have on her.

Neither did she like to disappoint little Millie, to whom the telling of such great news to Miss Eunice was an event of wonderful importance, but she could trust her to see the reason of the matter.

"Millie," she said deprecatingly, "it may frighten Miss Eunice even more than it frightened mother to hear too suddenly that Cousin Rex has been here; don't you think it would be better that I should take the rose to her and explain about it?"

"Yes 'm," answered Millie, choking down her disappointment and bravely putting the rose in her mother's hand; "but you 'll give it to her *quick*, won't you, mother, before it fades any more?"

"Right away," answered her mother, smiling her

appreciation of the child's abnegation. "And, Millie," she added as she turned to go up to Eunice's room, "if Cæsar should announce breakfast before I come down, tell them to sit down without me—I may be detained."

Millie ran down to finish her chat with "Butternuts," and Mrs. Charlton went up-stairs. She had given Millie those last instructions because she was not quite sure what Eunice would do. If she were at all like other girls she might easily faint or go into hysterics at the news, for Mrs. Charlton had long since decided that Rex had been the great tragedy in Eunice's life.

But Eunice was not like other girls. She trembled and turned white, fearing she knew not what, while Mrs. Charlton was delicately trying to prepare her for the great news; but when she gave her the rose and the message that came with it, a swift look of exaltation flashed into Eunice's face. Her cheeks were glowing, her eyes were shining, as she caught the rose swiftly from Mrs. Charlton's hand.

"Oh, Mrs. Charlton," she murmured happily, "it was Rex!"

Mrs. Charlton had never heard Eunice call him anything but Mr. McAllister, but his name on her lips did not surprise her.

"Yes, I think so," she said; and then she could not help adding: "But why do you suppose he did not come to see us?"

"Oh, he could not," Eunice returned confidently.

"I 'm sure he would have come if he could." Then a quick thought came to her:

"Mrs. Charlton, do you remember two officers trying to ride in at the gate last evening, and the sentinel would not let them?"

"Yes, but why?"

"Mrs. Charlton," said Eunice solemnly, "I am sure one of them was Rex. I was sure of it at the time, but I tried to think it was only one of my foolish fancies. I wanted to run down to the gate while they were parleying with the sentry, but I knew how foolish I would seem to all of you."

"I wish you had followed your impulse, Eunice," said Mrs. Charlton; and then she added wonderingly, "But are you not disappointed to have him come so near and not see him?"

"Oh, yes, greatly disappointed," answered Eunice, simply. "But, Mrs. Charlton, I am so glad! I have been afraid, often, that he might have been killed in one of those awful battles, and now I know he is alive." And to herself she added, "And thinking of me."

Nothing could have been more significant to Eunice than the white rose, and she brooded so happily over the message it brought, over all that she was sure it was intended to mean, that she had little room for a feeling of disappointment or unhappiness of any kind.

Far from wanting to stay in her room alone, as Mrs. Charlton had rather thought she might, she was ready and quite willing to go down to breakfast with

the others, wearing Rex's rose in her hair, and her face so much brighter and younger and sweeter than it had been of late that the young officers at the table, whose furtive glances had heretofore been for Lucy's golden curls, were now divided in their admiration and lost a large part of the awe with which they had heretofore regarded the New England school-teacher.

And when the fact that Rex McAllister has been in Bellaire comes up at the table (but not his message to Eunice), it appears that the young colonel knows him well, and has many tales to tell of his prowess on the field. Whereat Eunice's gray eyes shine with such pride that the colonel easily guesses her story.

It was in one of the picturesque passes leading from the Northumberland Valley across South Mountain that Rex's general had appointed to meet him not later than six o'clock on Monday evening. Long before six the general was there, sitting on a rock beside a bubbling spring—the spring that Rex himself had selected for their meeting-place, since it was a well-known landmark and easy to locate.

It has been a long, hot June day, but in that pleasant forest glade, high hills rising all around it, and the little brook from the bubbling spring dancing merrily down its rocky bed bordered with fragrant pennyroyal, it is cool and dewy and refreshing to the tired horses and tired men gathered there.

The general is bending over a map of southern Pennsylvania, and around him is a little group of officers, Hill, Longstreet, McLaws, all eagerly studying

the same map and trying to guess whether it is on the York or Hanover or Baltimore turnpike they may expect to meet the Army of the Potomac.

It is nearing six o'clock, and the general is growing visibly restless and anxious. He has just sent one of his young officers out to see if he can discover what has become of his aide, Lieutenant McAllister, when down the Gettysburg road, from the opposite direction, he dashes into sight. He is worn and spent and white. In the twenty hours since he said good-by to his general, he has been out of the saddle only long enough to curry and feed his horse. His own meals have been precarious ones, and have largely been made from early June apples picked from the orchards along his route.

But he brings great news. First of all, Hooker is no longer commander of the Army of the Potomac. Hooker has resigned because the authorities at Washington would not give him unconditional control of the Harper's Ferry troops; and on the eve of a great battle (for no one doubts that a great battle is preparing) the Army of the Potomac has a new commander. That in itself is hopeful news, for Meade, the new general, has not yet proved what he can do, and they have had trial of the mettle of "Fighting Joe" at Chancellorsville, and know he is an antagonist to be dreaded.

But Rex's next news is disquieting. Meade's army is advancing in several divisions, under Hancock, Reynolds, Slocum, and Sickles, toward Gettysburg. Buford's cavalry Rex himself had caught a glimpse

of not three hours before, with their horses' heads turned in the same direction.

And he has had news of Stuart, gleaned from a band of refugee farmers; for Rex's coat, the only part of his dress that made any pretensions to uniform, lies neatly folded in his saddle-bags, and in his flannel shirt and soft felt hat he can easily masquerade as a fleeing farmer himself. Only his speech might betray him, but Rex has lived four years within sound of the peculiar Pennsylvania inflections, and it is a small matter to adopt them for his own when necessary.

Stuart had been in engagement with Kilpatrick at Hanover, and had routed him. He had been burning bridges, tearing up railroads, destroying telegraphic communication, and capturing supplies. He had been most of the time between the Army of the Potomac and Washington, and as the Union troops were between him and his commander, communication had been impossible. He was now advancing toward York, but was moving slowly, hampered by his captured trains of mules and horses.

The general had listened quietly through Rex's startling budget of news. He had not been sure until this moment that the Union troops had crossed the Potomac; to know that they were all well on their way toward Gettysburg, only a few miles distant, was startling indeed. But he made no sign until Rex's last words; then he groaned:

"Oh, what folly! Stuart thinks this is only one of his raids, and he spends his time in playing with the

enemy and thinks I will be delighted with his present of a few hundred mules, when I am needing him here to keep me informed of the movements of the enemy!" Then he added with a burst of the impatience that his generals had seen before, but so rarely that it was greatly dreaded:

"That is the way with cavalry! They are good enough for raiding and foraging, but they are never on hand when you want them. *Stuart should be here at this minute!*"

There was no reply from any in the little circle, and the general sat with his head bowed in his hands for a moment. When he lifted it his impatience was all gone, and he said, with the tenderness that was the strength and the weakness of his character:

"I am wrong. There is no finer, more brilliant, or more trustworthy soldier in the army than Stuart, and he is only acting under orders. I myself told him to get all the supplies possible, and Longstreet ordered him to get in the rear of Hooker."

And then, with an entire change of tone:

"Gentlemen, the hour for action has arrived! Lieutenant Harding, you will ride at once to Bellaire and countermand my orders to Ewell. I had ordered him to advance on Henrysburg and capture it; you will tell him to turn his troops southward, cross South Mountain, and await orders at Cashtown. I fear he may already have left; if so, you will follow him, overtake him, and turn him back. The Army of the Potomac is coming north; we will turn south and meet it!"

"Wait one moment," he added as the little circle began to disintegrate and get ready for movement. Turning to Rex, he said formally:

"Lieutenant McAllister, you will have embroidered upon your collar the single star of a major. I present to you, gentlemen, Major McAllister, of my staff, who has this day rendered distinguished service to the Southern Confederacy!"

CHAPTER XXV

SHOT AND SHELL

IT was as the general had feared. Ewell had left Bellaire at five o'clock in the afternoon, and was well on his way to Henrysburg when the messenger overtook him and turned him back toward Gettysburg.

It would have been difficult for the Charltons to believe, two days before, that they would have seen their enemy depart with any feeling akin to regret. Yet Colonel Morris and his staff had shown them such uniform courtesy and consideration that, almost against their will, a feeling of friendliness for them had sprung up in the hearts of the Charlton household. Dr. Charlton himself, sturdy patriot though he was, took the colonel's hand with real feeling at parting, though he could not resist a Parthian shaft.

"You have been the most courteous of foes, Colonel Morris," he said; "and I could wish for you a better lot than to be fighting against your country, and a better fate than a rebel's grave. But be assured of this, if the tables are ever turned and I can show you some of the kindness you have shown my family, it will be my greatest pleasure to do so."

"I am sure of that, doctor," returned the colonel,

with his invariable courtesy, for he liked the doctor none the less for his fearless admonitions. "But you must not consider your obligation as too heavy. To be allowed to spend two days as members of your family circle has more than repaid us for any consideration we may have shown you. It has been a boon to my officers and myself that you can hardly estimate."

They were all out on the veranda to say good-by to him,—Mrs. Charlton, Eunice, Lucy, and Millie. The boys were excitedly watching the formation of the marching lines on the campus, and with keenly critical eyes were taking in every detail of the methods of getting a great army under way. The colonel diffidently made his good-bys to the three ladies, who were all cordial to him in their characteristic ways: Eunice calmly, Lucy shyly, and Mrs. Charlton impulsively. Little Millie was silently weeping; for down on the campus, in the ranks drawn up near the gate in the hedge, stood her "Butternuts" waving his hand to her, and she knew she would never see him again.

No; she would never see him again. "Butternuts" and his colonel both lay on the slopes of Seminary Ridge when that first day's fighting at Gettysburg was over, but a stone's throw from where the gallant Reynolds had fallen. They did not learn the fate of "Butternuts" until long years afterward, but the papers told of the fall of Colonel Morris, acting brigadier-general; and while in his Georgia home there were tears and lamentations for him, and a mother refusing to be comforted for her only son, there were

tender and mournful regrets for him also in a Northern household.

But the days of excitement were not ended for Bellaire when the last file of Ewell's corps marched out on the Henrysburg turnpike. Monday night and Tuesday were quiet enough in the old town,—so quiet that it seemed dull and forlorn to the younger members of the household, who had been living on excitement for the last week, and who could almost have wished the Southern troops back again.

Early Tuesday evening there was a little flurry of excitement when a body of cavalry, no one knew whose, though it was rumored they were some of Stuart's men, dashed into the west end of the town, rode into the campus and fed their horses, and, each man with his bridle over his arm, lay down on the grass for a much-needed sleep. At midnight, when the quiet town was buried in slumber, without sound of bugle or trumpet they stole away so silently that although they were at the very doors of the Charltons, no one heard them go, and the boys, rising early to have one more good look at the famous Stuart's cavalry, rubbed their eyes at sight of the deserted campus, emptied as if by magic.

They were disappointed, but the day was to bring forth such startling events as entirely threw in the shade all that had gone before.

It was the morning of the first of July, and at Gettysburg, only twenty miles away, Hill's barefooted men, in search of shoes, were running into Buford's

cavalry, and the rattle of muskets and carbines was the opening note of that great three days' battle that decided the fate of a continent: whether it should bear between its mighty boundary seas two republics or one. The heads of the columns of the two great armies—the Army of Northern Virginia and the Army of the Potomac—had met in that little Pennsylvania town, and neither of them knew it. They took each the other to be mere skirmishing parties, and the fusillade of bullets but a little diversion in the great game of war.

In Bellaire, twenty miles away, there was no sound of rattling musketry; nor even when, a little later, the great dogs of war began to belch forth smoke and shell and solid shot, did any echo of it reach Bellaire. South Mountain lay between, and the thunder of cannon and all the awful roar of a mighty battle rolled back and forth among its spurs and ridges until they lost themselves and died away in its wooded glens.

But though the Charltons knew nothing of the great battle going on so near them, and in which the very men camped at their door only two days before were playing a giant's part, they had enough to keep hearts and hands fully occupied. The Union troops were coming back! They would be once more within the Union lines, and though they had been shut out of them for only five days, it seemed a long and weary time.

By five o'clock the troops began to come in, and at the first news of their arrival the town flocked

to the Square to give them welcome, bringing with them every dainty that their long-unreplenished larders could scrape together.

These were no seasoned veterans; they were the State reserves, and the long march from Henrysburg had tested their mettle. The townspeople were wild with delight at seeing the boys in blue, and very beautiful they looked in their new uniforms and shining accoutrements, after the rags and homespun of the Southerners. At least so thought Lucy, though Eunice could not but feel that these were only playing at war—those others had known all its horrors.

But though the soldiers were militia who had never seen a battle, their officers were most of them veterans, and as at the command, "Stack arms! Break ranks!" the soldiers threw themselves on the ground to rest, an officer sprang from his horse, gave the bridle to an orderly, and hurried over to where Eunice was standing alone, separated from Lucy and Millie by the crowding of the closely packed mass of people come down to welcome the soldiers. The pushing had forced her to the front, and so hers was the first face on which the young captain's glance rested.

"Eunice!" he called as he reached her side. She looked up, greatly startled, for she had not seen him coming and for a moment she did not recognize him; bearded and bronzed by nine months of hard service, he looked little enough like the John Rogers she had known.

"Come away," he said, when her joyful greeting

assured him that he was not forgotten. "We have given the men one hour to lie on the ground and rest while the commissaries are arranging for their quarters for the night. I have nothing to do with that, and I can spend my hour with you."

He forced a passage for her through the crowd, and hurried her along Main Street toward the college.

"I want to see the old campus once more, Eunice," he said; "it may be my last chance. I was detailed to help bring the reserves up from Henrysburg, but I am to go on to-morrow to join my own regiment at Gettysburg, and I have much to hear and tell in this hour."

To Eunice the meeting gave only pure joy, but to him the pain and joy were nearly equal. She was lovelier than he had remembered her, but almost her first words reassured him of what he had always known—that she was not for him. She was bubbling over with the happiness of having heard from Rex once more, and in John she was sure of a sympathetic listener.

But she was not selfishly interested in her own affairs; she was very deeply and intensely interested also in his experiences of camp and battle. They had walked down Lovers' Lane and then far beyond the campus out toward Mile Hill, famous for its views of sunsets, where they had often walked in the old days, and John was in the midst of a thrilling recountal of the horrors of Chancellorsville when over their heads flew a screeching and screaming shell, and burst just beyond them.

It was a familiar sound to John, and he knew instantly what it meant. Eunice, who had never heard it before, stood aghast at what she thought was some new and hideous kind of rocket celebrating the approaching Fourth. It was no time for ceremony. John seized her hand and with a laconic "The rebels! We must run for it!" began to hurry her toward home, running as long as Eunice's breath held out, and walking with long strides or half carrying her when it failed.

It was not only to get Eunice safely under cover that he was so impatient, but it fretted him greatly to be absent from his post when he knew not what emergency had arisen, and was aware how greatly he must be needed with raw and undisciplined troops under fire for the first time.

It seemed to him they would never reach the little gate in the hedge, as shell and shot came faster and, the gunners getting their aim, no longer flew far over the town, but fell constantly nearer. They had just reached the gate and John had passed through first to hold it open for Eunice, when a shell burst directly over their heads.

"Fall!" John shouted, and fell flat himself that the flying fragments might have less chance of striking. Eunice did not hear his command; she only heard the awful explosion, saw John fall, and did not doubt for a moment that he was killed. She never knew how she mounted the veranda steps, walked through the hall, and went down the stairway to the basement, where the terrified family had gathered for

refuge from the flying shells. At the foot of the stairs, Mrs. Charlton, waiting for her, saw her white face and that John was half supporting her. Eunice's eyes were wide with horror.

"Mr. Rogers is killed!" she gasped, and sank fainting into Mrs. Charlton's outstretched arms.

"Take care of her, Mrs. Charlton, please," said John, deeply moved: "she is not hurt—only terribly frightened. I dare not stay. I must hasten back to my command." And without stopping for greeting or good-by, he hurried away.

Five thousand troops had marched into Bellaire and stacked their guns under the green trees of the Square, and fully five thousand citizens were massed around the edges of the Square to see them come. The men were lying at ease on the soft grass, devouring with the relish of hungry men the tarts and pies and cakes and fruit and sandwiches the people had lavished upon them, joking with each other over the incidents of their first long march, or, when they were near enough, laughing and chatting with the citizens —when swinging into the east end of Main Street thundered a body of cavalry singing lustily as they rode Stuart's famous song, "Jine the Cavalry."

The frightened pickets, many of them young boys, and all of them seeing the enemy for the first time, fired their guns and fled. At such a reception, Fitzhugh Lee, leading the advance brigade of Stuart's cavalry, expecting to find his own friends in the town, and supplies of all kinds that his men greatly needed,

stopped short, thoroughly nonplussed. No one had told him that Lee's army had turned south again. His instructions had been to get in touch as soon as possible with Ewell's corps, and he had expected to find Ewell in Bellaire. Where, then, was Lee's army? Where was Ewell? Fitzhugh Lee did not know, but he intended to find out. He withdrew a little from the town, planted his field-guns on a slight elevation commanding it, and sent that first shell screaming over its streets.

In the Square, at that first rattle of musketry, the men had sprung to their arms, almost without waiting for the command. The flying pickets brought terror with them.

"Stuart's cavalry!" they shouted, for Stuart's song was too well known to leave them in any doubt. Stuart was a name to drive dismay to the hearts of seasoned veterans; they were brave young militia, indeed, who dared to form in line against him.

The rattle of musketry meant very little to the densely packed citizens. They had heard it often of late, for picket-firing and skirmishing had come to be every-day affairs. "Picket-firing," they said to themselves, and stood still. But when they saw the soldiers springing to arms, saw the flying pickets, and heard the wild cries from all sides, "The rebels! The rebels!" panic seized them.

In that mad flight for home, children were ruthlessly hustled aside, and little Millie was torn from Lucy and carried up a narrow back street by a rushing stream of humanity that swept her along with

them, with no volition of her own. She had no idea why they were fleeing, for she had not understood the cry of "The rebels! The rebels!" but she must run with the others or be trampled by them.

At her own gate she found herself free from the crowd, and looking down to the Iron Gate corner, saw her mother and Miss Caroline Perkins and ran quickly down to them. They were standing there, very calmly, watching the flying crowds, and wondering what it all meant, but without excitement. There had been so many startling things of late that they were growing hardened, and it would have to be something very startling, indeed, that would shake Miss Caroline, model of deportment to young ladies, from her elegant equipoise.

But it came! Over their heads flew the screeching and screaming shell. The two ladies and Millie looked up.

"A rocket," said Miss Caroline, mildly wondering.

"A shell!" cried Mrs. Charlton, wildly. "Oh, Miss Caroline, how will you get home! I can't go with you. My children are scattered all over town. I must get them together."

A mother's terror was in her voice and face.

"Do not fear for me, my dear," said Miss Caroline, trembling but brave. "Go find your children, and I will seek Phœbe!"

And fast as her old limbs could carry her, tottering now with fear more than with age, and with anxiety for her sister more than both, she hurried away. Mrs. Charlton waited only to see that her old friend was

moving off at a pace that would soon bring her to the shelter of home, and then, with Millie clinging to her hand, uttering no cry, but with winged feet pulling her mother faster and faster, Mrs. Charlton ran as she had not run in years.

The shells were flying fast by the time they reached home, and, as Mrs. Charlton had said, not a child was there, not even Dr. Charlton. But they came flying in from all directions in a moment, George Edgar carrying Baby Ned, and Lucy and Henry Sidney, who had been hunting for the lost Millie, not far behind. "Me 'n' Charlie," as the two inseparable little boys were called by the family in gentle ridicule of Theodore Howard's constant phrase, came from no one knew where, and no one asked, so happy were they to be all together again. Last of all came the doctor, who had been rounding up his little family, and they gathered together in mother's room, wondering what the night was to bring to them. Millie and the little boys huddled together on a couch, their arms around one another. Each little heart was brave with the heroism of childhood. This was a battle, and before morning they would all be dead—they did not for a moment doubt it; but silently they sat there, close clasped in each other's arms, trembling but uttering no sound. They were all greatly distressed at Eunice's absence; but Lucy, too far away to get near them, had seen the officer that she had recognized sooner than Eunice to be Mr. Rogers, and it was some comfort to know that he was with her and taking care of her.

But the shot and shell, that had at first flown far

over the town, had gradually been coming nearer, and now they were falling and bursting all about the campus and the president's house. Dr. Charlton had begun to think they must move down-stairs to safer quarters, when one struck the house, tearing out great stones from the wall and completely wrecking the room and its furniture where it struck. It was the room next to the one where they were all gathered, and Baby Ned, too young to know much about self-control, broke into terrified wailing and would be comforted only in his father's arms.

Hurriedly Dr. Charlton marshaled them all down-stairs into the basement, where the thick foundation walls offered better chance of protection. There was no sign of fear in his voice or his manner, and Mrs. Charlton, now that her children were all about her, was calm, cheerful, and resourceful; but on no child's heart did terror lie so heavy as on theirs. It was fear for her children and her husband that held its cold clutch of her heart; it was fear for his adored wife and their little ones that came near at moments to unmanning as brave a heart as ever beat.

Hardly had they reached the basement when another shell seemed to strike the house, so near were its horrible detonations. But it was the fine old linden that was struck just above the heads of Eunice and Captain Rogers, and it was only a moment later that the trembling family in the basement heard hurried steps in the hall above and knew it must be Eunice. They saw her coming down the steps with wide, unseeing eyes and colorless face, Captain Rogers by her

side, heard her words. and knew that she had been as one dead from the moment Captain Rogers had fallen.

This death-like swoon was a new terror to them; the horrors of the night seemed to be folding them about as with a pall. By the time Eunice had recovered consciousness and had been made to understand that Captain Rogers was absolutely unhurt, the gas went out all over the house. Either by some accidental shot or wilfully, the Confederates had set the gasworks afire and the whole eastern sky was ablaze. Fortunately, there were candles at hand, but they made a dim and gruesome light compared with the cheery gaslight.

The firing had been growing more furious; it was now one continued and deafening roar, though not so many shells fell on the campus, as the guns seemed to be trained finally on the soldiers in the Square.

Suddenly there was a lull, and in a few moments, greatly to the delight and comfort of them all, Captain Rogers appeared at the basement door. He had come on sad business, but he had solicited the errand that he might see how his friends were getting on. He was greatly relieved to find that the shells had done no more serious damage, and that Eunice had entirely recovered.

"They have sent in a flag of truce," he said, "and now our general and Fitzhugh Lee are conferring. Fitzhugh demands a surrender, but I don't think there is any danger of 'Baldy' surrendering as long as his ammunition holds out and his men keep their courage; they are behaving like veterans."

Then turning to Dr. Charlton:

"I am sent, sir, to ask your permission to use one of the college buildings as a hospital. They have been raking the streets with grape and canister, and they are ugly things. We want to get the wounded up in the west end here, as far from the firing as possible, and put a red light over the building. I think they will understand and respect it, and train their guns elsewhere."

It was wonderful how the thought of doing something to help put life and spirit into every one. All the terror of the children fled away, and Lucy and Eunice were full of fire and patriotism. Dr. Charlton went at once with Captain Rogers to see about getting the keys of West College and opening the rooms. Mrs. Charlton hurried up-stairs to look among her store of linen and blankets and pillows, to see what could be spared for the wounded. Lucy and Eunice helped her to put them up in packages, and, with the two older boys, carried them over to West College. Millie and the two younger boys, proud and happy to be employed on errands of such importance, were sent around the neighborhood, from house to house, to beg supplies of all kinds to be sent over to the hospital. For an hour there was no firing and every one was at work and happy.

Eunice, indeed, had found her vocation. As the wounded began to be brought in she was for a moment overcome with faintness at the sight of suffering and wounds; but the strength of will that had enabled her to withstand Rex's pleading came to her support

now. She begged the surgeons to be allowed to stay and help them, and when they would have demurred she said steadily:

"Only try me; if I prove unfit you can send me away."

Dr. Charlton, too, tried to dissuade her; he feared it would be more than she could endure; but when he looked into her face and saw the exaltation of soul glowing in her serene eyes, he dared say no more.

Captain Rogers alone had only words of encouragement for her. He had been superintending all the arrangements, and now he was going back to his post. The firing had begun again, faster and more furious. The rest of Stuart's cavalry had come up and new guns had been unlimbered. Like the others, these must get the range, and, like the others, their shot seemed at first to fall around the college buildings.

But the heavy boom of solid shot and the rending and tearing of bursting shell had no longer any terrors for Eunice. In these short hours that she had been under fire, she seemed to have been lifted out of herself. She was knowing now a little of the horrors of war, of which Rex knew so much, and glorying in the knowledge. She was ardently longing to do something heroic that could prove her worthy of his heroism. For his sake she could nerve herself to go through scenes from which the whole tender woman within her shrank, passionately feeling that every gaping wound was his, that it was his groans and his suffering she was soothing with her cool and tender touch.

Yet when Captain Rogers was ready to go and came to tell her good-by, her heart failed her for a moment. She had not realized how much she had leaned upon his strong and cheery presence in these terrible surroundings.

"Come out with me for a breath of air," he said, seeing her sudden pallor. "It will do you good, and you will come back stronger for your work."

They stood under the quiet stars for a moment without speaking, the cool night air refreshing and reviving them both. The guns had got their range again; only an occasional shot plowed up the green turf of the campus or an occasional shell shattered some of its beautiful trees. Eunice shuddered at every shot, but no longer feared them. John did not even hear them.

"Eunice," he said wistfully, "there is certain to be a great and awful battle in the next few days. The two armies are rapidly coming together, and somewhere near here, I think, it will be fought. Do you know what I have been thinking as I saw you moving about among those wounded men and bringing comfort and smiles in place of distress and groans? I was praying that, should it be my lot to be wounded in the impending battle, it would not be so far away that you could not come and be the angel of mercy and comfort to me that you have been to them."

"Oh, I hope you are wrong!" Eunice answered quickly. "I hope there will be no more awful battles—I could not bear it!"

She was thinking of Rex and that he had escaped

so far, but she could not hope that he would always be invulnerable. Then a sudden compunction seized her. She should be thinking also of this friend who had been so steadfastly kind to her, and she said very sweetly and solemnly:

"I pray with all my heart that there may be no more great battles, and with all my heart that you may never be wounded; but if you are, I will try to come to you, wherever you are."

He could not answer her, but he seized her hands and held them for a moment in a grip under which she winced and could have cried out for pain, but would not. Then he said under his breath:

"Go back quickly, Eunice, while I am watching you. Good-by! God be with you!"

For two hours longer the firing kept up, and then there was another cessation. Once more Captain Rogers rode up to Dr. Charlton's to bring instructions. Fitzhugh Lee had sent word that every woman and child must leave town; he would utterly destroy the town, and by ten o'clock next morning not one stone should be left upon another. Captain Rogers strongly urged on Dr. Charlton that he should take his family and Eunice and go out to some farm-house in the country, where he could find a temporary refuge. Fitzhugh Lee was evidently infuriated by the stubborn and unexpected resistance he had met, and meant what he said. He had set fire to every part of the town he could reach; the gas-works were burning, the barracks were ablaze, and a third great fire had just started up.

Messengers had been sent all over town with Fitzhugh Lee's message, and already hundreds, women weeping and children crying, were hurrying by the campus and fleeing to the open country. But the doctor, looking at the sad lines of refugees, shook his head.

"No; our walls are thick; we will stay here. I would rather trust to the fortunes of battle than subject my tender family to the certain hardships of exposure to the night, with no surety of any shelter being found."

Fitzhugh Lee had given the people an hour to get out of town, when, he said, the bombardment would be renewed with redoubled fury. But the truce was longer than an hour, and when firing began again, it seemed to Dr. Charlton that, far from being redoubled, it was less furious than it had been. Before long there was no doubt about it. It began to be more and more desultory, and at length there was only an occasional shot at longer and longer intervals.

There were faint signs of dawn in the east. Dr. Charlton went over to the hospital and called Eunice.

"Come, Eunice," he said authoritatively; "the day is breaking, and I believe the enemy is fleeing. You must come home and get some rest, or we will be sending you to the hospital."

Eunice knew he was right. Trembling flesh could stand no more, for the strain of the last few hours had been very great. Her patients were quiet, and there were no new ones coming in. She was glad to go home with him through the fresh and dewy campus, the morning rapidly brightening around them, the

birds stirring in their nests, the firing almost or entirely ceased.

They welcomed her home as if she had been gone on a long and dangerous journey, and up-stairs in her own, quiet room, full five minutes since the last gun had been fired, the birds caroling delirious "Te Deums" that the wild night was over, her head upon her pillow, with a sense of perfect peace and security she sank almost at once into deep, refreshing sleep.

Little did she or Dr. Charlton dream that it was to Rex the town owed its deliverance. On the afternoon of that first day's fight at Gettysburg, the general was standing on the ridge near the Seminary, watching Ewell's yelling veterans drive the Federal troops down the slopes and across the town.

"Rex," he said suddenly, "I must have Stuart. To-day's fight will be as nothing compared with to-morrow's. I must have every available man and gun. Do you think you can find him for me?"

"I think so, sir," said Rex; but if his words were modest, his air was confident. He was looking very dapper for a Confederate soldier. Rex's love of dress would be one of his last traits to perish. Were he to die in the much-vaunted last ditch, he would die as well dressed as it was possible to be. He had, with his own unskilled fingers, embroidered on his collar the star that indicated his new rank, unraveling a bit of torn lace to get the necessary gold thread. He had also added to his uniform an extra touch of gold lace, ripped from a discarded one, and he wore a

plume in his hat in exact imitation of Stuart's famous plume. If Eunice had beheld him, I am not sure that she would have been more pleased to see him so becomingly arrayed or more displeased at the evidence of his perennial vanity.

But Rex's vanity in dress interfered not at all with his duties as an aide. He had been standing beside his general, but at his words he sprang upon his horse, saluted, and was off. Long and weary hours he rode before he found even a trace of Stuart; then, near York, he heard that he had gone in the direction of Bellaire. It was a magic word! Here, perhaps, was his chance! If he found himself in Bellaire again, he would not again miss seeing Eunice; and he thought, with a little throb of elation, that there would be no one to call him away on the very eve of seeing her. For the time being he would be his own master, and though he was due back in Gettysburg at the earliest possible moment, five minutes he would take to look on Eunice's face once more.

But alas for all such plans of mortals! Long before he reached Bellaire he heard sounds of firing and saw the sky aflame. His heart stood still. What did it mean? What was Stuart about? Was Eunice in danger?

He spurred on his lagging horse and reached Stuart and Fitzhugh Lee just after the message had been sent to the women and children of Bellaire. He delivered his own message, "Report at Gettysburg immediately," and told them of the general's anxiety at their long absence. Then he painted in glowing colors the

glorious battle of the day and the victory on Seminary Ridge.

Lee and Stuart were both eager to be off at once, but it required some little scheming to keep the troops in Bellaire in ignorance of their departure. It was finally arranged to leave a single battery of three guns, which should at first keep up a rapid fire, and then one by one, they too should steal away.

Rex was for having them all go at once. He could not bear to think of another shot fired in Eunice's direction, but of course he had no voice in the matter. His own horse was so spent that he must rest it awhile, and it was arranged that he should remain with the battery left to keep up the ruse, while the others started for South Mountain Pass as quickly as they could get their horses hitched to guns and caissons. There was nothing for Rex to do while his horse was resting, and he thought he knew these fields and roads well enough to find his way in the dark. He skirted the south side of the town and came up in the west end, where were neither soldiers nor fighting.

The first streaks of dawn were in the east as he entered the campus and walked over toward Lovers' Lane. The firing was growing very desultory; that was a signal that he could not tarry. He walked rapidly, intending, if the way was clear, to stand a moment under Eunice's window.

Half-way across the campus he suddenly stopped. There were lights in West College and figures in uniform moving about. The dawn was spreading a little; he could see quite clearly. Two figures, a man

and a woman, had just come out of West College and were walking across to the president's house. It was Dr. Charlton and Eunice. He stood and gazed with straining eyes, longing to cry out to them and not daring because of the blue uniforms in West College. He watched them until they passed through the little gate in the hedge, saw them mount the veranda steps, and heard the hall door close behind them.

With a great cry, as if his heart had broken, he turned and ran down to the Iron Gate, clanged it recklessly behind him, and, hardly caring whether he ran into an enemy or not, took the shortest route to his horse. He found the last gun just moving off, and silently mounting, he rode back through the glorious dawn of that awful day of carnage to the dreadful battle-field waiting to receive him.

CHAPTER XXVI

A FAREWELL MESSAGE

NOT until late on the second of July did they learn in Bellaire of that terrible battle raging so near them. Morning had dawned, the hour of ten had come and gone,—that hour at which the town was to have been utterly destroyed,—and there were no signs of the enemy.

Captain Rogers rode up to a hurried breakfast with the Charltons. He had said good-by to his militia company and was off by way of Henrysburg to join his regiment at Gettysburg; there was no going by South Mountain Pass, since that way lay the whole of Lee's army.

Eunice was not at breakfast; she was still sleeping, and John would not let Mrs. Charlton waken her.

"No," he said; "I have so short a time to stay, and she needs the sleep. I bade her good-by last night; if you will say good-by to her again for me, that will do as well."

Better, he thought to himself bitterly; for, strive as he might against it, he was greatly depressed and was not sure enough of himself to say good-by to Eunice again with his spirits already at their lowest ebb.

Eunice felt a moment of keenest regret when she found that he had come and gone without her seeing him once more, but it was only for a moment. She was eager to be at her work in the hospital and anxious to know how her patients were doing, and heart and hands were too full for long regrets.

When, late in the afternoon, the tidings came that this was the second day of a great battle between the two armies, perhaps the most deadly the war had yet known, she was as one dazed. All that evening and all the next day she went about as in a dream, listening with bated breath lest some dreadful tidings come of one or the other of her two friends fighting in opposing ranks on that terrible field. But none came, and though her heart lay dead within her, she went about her hospital duties, skilfully applying dressings and bandages and courageously bringing to others the cheer and comfort she so much needed herself.

Early Sunday morning the first train came through from Henrysburg. The militia had in some rough fashion relaid the tracks and a train had crept cautiously over them as far as Bellaire. It brought a little company of nurses from Philadelphia bound for Gettysburg. All communication by rail was cut off with that town, and Bellaire was the nearest point to which trains were running; from there the journey would have to be made in carriages. All day Saturday, Lee's army had stood awaiting Meade's attack. It did not come, and on the night of the Fourth they quietly withdrew toward the Potomac. But Ewell's corps, as rear-guard, was still in Gettysburg Sunday morning,

and the little company of nurses came up to Dr. Charlton's house to wait for tidings that the way was clear for them through South Mountain Pass.

Here was the opportunity for which Eunice's soul had been longing. From the moment she had first heard of the battle she had been planning some way of getting there. Had she not promised Captain Rogers she would go to him if he should be wounded? And how else was she to find out whether or not he was wounded? And still more urgent was the thought of Rex. She could hardly hope that he had escaped again, when every report was of such terrible slaughter; and perhaps he, too, might be wounded there and needing her.

It was hard to persuade Dr. and Mrs. Charlton to let her go. The other nurses were all older; it seemed to them both that Eunice was too young and too frail to be sent into the midst of such terrible scenes. But her steady, quiet persistency—that little quality of hers that the doctor sometimes called obstinacy—won its way at last. The surgeons in the college hospital were loath to part with her, but ready to give her a certificate as an efficient nurse from her three days' work with them, and that annulled Dr. Charlton's final argument that the authorities would not receive her. The other nurses were willing to take charge of her, and her way seemed so clear that Dr. and Mrs. Charlton could no longer oppose a purpose that they felt was as steadfast as the hills.

Horses were at a premium in Bellaire, for almost every horse had either been captured by the Confed-

erates or driven away for safety. Dr. Charlton had undertaken to find some for the little party, but only after long search did he find a sturdy team of farm-horses that had been hidden away in a cave in the hills. They were to start early Monday morning to avoid the heat of the day; and by five o'clock Mrs. Charlton, the most energetic of women, had given them a cup of coffee and some breakfast and started them on their way. It was a sad parting at that early hour: Lucy was in tears, Millie was sobbing bitterly, the boys were trying in vain to seem indifferent and pretend that some unmanly sounds were not of their making, and there was a mist in the doctor's blue eyes. Only Mrs. Charlton was smiling bravely. Now that she had fully made up her mind to let Eunice go, it seemed to her a glorious thing to be doing, and she could almost envy her the heroine's crown with which she had invested her.

Their way led over the Hanover turnpike, between rich fields of grain trampled by the passing of many horses and men, and then through beautiful Mount Holly and South Mountain Pass. It was a familiar road to Eunice. Mount Holly was a favorite resort with the young people of Bellaire for picnics and drives and sleighing-parties; and now, as they passed through its deep, shaded glens and climbed the mountain road, with the little stream rushing noisily through a rocky ravine below them, Eunice was recalling one of the red-letter days of her life. It was in her first fall in Bellaire, in the beautiful Indian summer, when there had been a nutting-party to

Mount Holly, and they had spent the long, golden day wandering through the mountain dells, gathering chestnuts and wintergreens and maidenhair ferns, all the lovely spoil of the wild-wood. After a picnic dinner on a mossy rock beside this very mountain stream, they had started to explore the rocky ravine down which it tumbled; and Eunice, an ardent lover of mountain-climbing and with the foot of a gazel, had far outdistanced the others—all but Rex, who would not be outdistanced; and when they found they had left the others so far behind, they sat down to wait for them at the head of the glen, where the brook tumbled in a foamy cascade over a rocky cliff. Rex had never before been so gentle and winning. It was in the early days of his reform, and he was full of earnest plans and noble ambitions, which he poured into Eunice's sympathetic ear with all the ardor of his temperament.

How often she had thought of that day! And how long ago it seemed! It was not three years, but Eunice felt that she had lived a lifetime since, and the Bellaire of to-day was cold and gray and stern compared with the sunny Bellaire of those Arcadian days.

They crossed the summit of the mountain pass and began the descent of the other side. They had left the little mountain stream and all the associations with Rex in those happy golden days, and now, with every onward mile, they were coming on new traces of the movements of great armies. Everywhere disorder and devastation. Eunice's thoughts were no longer with the Rex of the past; she was looking forward trem-

blingly, fearfully, hopefully, to the possibility of seeing him in Gettysburg. Yet she knew it could be only as a prisoner, or wounded or dying, that she could hope to see him, and horror and shrinking dread crushed out the hope.

Eunice had been two days in Gettysburg. With a resolution that was like iron, and that no one could have dreamed of finding in that slight girl, she steeled her heart against the horrors that met her on every side, and went about the ward to which she had been assigned with such calm and ready cheerfulness as made her a tower of strength to the surgeons and an angel of light to the suffering men.

As she entered her ward on the morning of the third day, she came upon a face she had been looking for, feeling sure in her heart that she would come upon it some day. It was John Rogers, and he lay so motionless, his face so white, his eyes closed, she would have thought him dead but that she knew the dead were not in hospitals. He had been brought in from the operating-room, and the surgeon of the ward gave him into Eunice's charge as a very ill patient who would need special care.

Eunice could not neglect her other patients, but there were hours that belonged to herself to do what she pleased, and those hours she devoted to him. For days he lay in a stupor, hovering between life and death, dead to the world about him; but when at last the light of consciousness returned to his eyes and they fell on Eunice sitting by his side, there was no sur-

prise in them, only a great joy. Once started on the road of recovery, he grew rapidly better. Just to see her moving about him, ministering to his wants, he said, was enough to bring him back from the brink of the grave, and he insisted that he had been conscious of her presence through all his unconsciousness, and that that alone had brought him back to life.

One day, as Eunice in one of her free hours was sitting by his cot, talking gently to him of sweet and happy things, it seemed to her that he was not listening. He was restless and his attention wandered. Eunice feared she was tiring him, and rose to go.

"Don't go, Eunice," he said, with an air of quiet authority. "Sit down again, please; I have something to tell you."

He was silent for a minute as she sat down again, and Eunice was vaguely frightened. There was something indefinable in his manner that suggested evil tidings; and as if in premonition of what was coming, her heart began to beat heavily.

"Eunice," he began at last, slowly, and with evident effort, "I have been waiting to get strong enough to tell you my story. I am getting well so fast now, under your skilful nursing, they will be sending me home in a few days, and I must not wait any longer. Dear friend," and his voice faltered a little, "it may be that I have sad news for you; but remember, as you listen, that I am not at all certain that my fears are true. There may have been a happier ending to my story than seemed possible to me then. Hope for the best as long as you are not sure of the worst."

He waited a moment, as if for her to speak; but a great dread had taken possession of her, she could hardly breathe, and speech was impossible.

"Are you sure you are strong enough to listen to me, Eunice?" he asked anxiously, seeing the color come and go in her cheeks and her eyes widening with terror.

She nodded with an imploring gesture, and in answer to it he went on:

"I was lying wounded on the slope of Little Round Top that second dreadful day of the fight. It was the evening of the day I left Bellaire—only a few hours since I had seen you. The rush of battle had passed on and left me lying there—dying, I thought. My eyes were closed, when I heard my name feebly called, and I turned in surprise to find a Confederate lying near me, wounded much more severely than I. I did not recognize him at first, until he spoke again, and then I knew it was Rex McAllister. We could neither of us move, but we were near enough to stretch out our hands to each other, and I never clasped a brother's hand more warmly or more gladly than I did his. He told me that he was dying, and asked of you. I told him all I knew of you, and what reason I had for knowing that you loved him as dearly as ever. His eyes, that seemed to me to be fast growing dim, brightened as I spoke, and his face lighted up with a smile.

" 'God bless her!' he whispered. 'Tell her that my last thoughts were of her, and that I have loved her every moment since I left her.'

On the battle-field.

"And then I performed a heroic act of self-sacrifice. I took from my buttonhole the little ribbon that is dingy and colorless now, but that had been with me in every battle and march since last September, and told him whose it was and how I got it, and gave it to him. He thanked me with a look, and laid it on his lips; and then we were both too weak to talk any more, and we lay there, hand in hand, until some of his men came up with a flag of truce to carry him away. He had fainted, I think, when they took him up, and the ribbon still lay on his lips. I was afraid it would be lost, and I asked them to tie it in his buttonhole, and they did so very reverently."

Eunice was weeping as if her heart had broken, but silently, that no one in the cots near by might know. She had buried her face in the coverlet of John's cot, and her stifled, heartbroken sobs shook him where he lay. He put his hand tenderly on her brown curls.

"Dear friend," he whispered, "you must not sorrow as one without hope. He thought he was dying, but it may be that he was mistaken. He may yet be living; do not give up all hope until you are sure. Wait until the war is over."

Eunice had no hope. She had always believed that this blow was preparing for her, and now it had fallen. But she had strength beyond the strength given to most women, and, crushing back her sorrow for the time, she lifted her head, smiled faintly, and whispered:

"I will try."

Then—she did not know why she did it, perhaps

because the eyes that met hers were brimming over with sympathy and tenderness, perhaps because she believed he, too, loved Rex—she seized in both her own hands the hand that had rested so tenderly on her head, pressed it convulsively to her heart for an instant, rose quickly, and fled.

John turned his face to the wall and groaned under his breath:

"O God, how can I bear it! How can I bear it! O happy, happy Rex!"

It was weeks later that there came to Eunice a sudden wonder that Mr. Rogers should have kept that bit of ribbon so long and cared for it so much; and a slow inkling of the truth sent the warm blood rushing to her face and then flowing back in pity and regret to her heart.

He was no longer in the hospital; he had been gone for weeks, and was now spending his convalescence with his nearest relative, a distant cousin. But Eunice had stayed on; she had found the one work that could comfort her in her great sorrow. She did not even go back to Bellaire. Dr. and Mrs. Charlton and Lucy came over to see her, bringing with them such of her belongings as she needed and sending the rest to her New England home; but to all their entreaties to come back with them to Bellaire, she made one steadfast reply:

"I cannot leave my work."

She did not dare leave it until the very latest moment at which she could reach her new school and be

ready to begin the fall teaching. One day of idleness, one hour not filled with cares and anxieties for the sick and suffering, might easily undermine all her carefully builded fabric of self-control.

And yet John's story had not brought her all pain; it was a joy to know that Rex had loved her through these long years, when sometimes she had almost believed he had forgotten her. And to know that he had died so nobly (for Eunice recognized that, whatever the cause might be, the devotion to it was noble) helped greatly to soothe the pain of knowing that she would never see him again.

CHAPTER XXVII

AFTER FOUR YEARS

THE Northumberland Valley lies smiling under June skies blue as Italy's, and bending over a happy country, once more at peace.

It is the June of '65; the war is over, and Eunice is coming, at the earnest invitation of the Charltons, to spend Commencement with them. She steps from the train into the same busy scene that had bewildered her almost five years before, and there is the same scholarly figure waiting to meet her with the same beaming smile in the kind blue eyes, but bending now to greet her with a kiss as he says in his cordial way, "I am very glad to see you, my dear Eunice."

There is but little change in his dress. Still the high silk stock and the swallowtail and the beaver hat; but Eunice notes changes in the face that has become very dear to her. There are lines about the eyes and mouth that did not use to be there, and they tell of great anxieties and wearing cares. The figure is a little more bent, and the temples are whitened; but it is a beautiful face to Eunice, and she glows with pleasure at his kiss, which she modestly returns.

"Judge," absolutely unchanged, is waiting for her

trunk, grinning delightedly, and pulling his bunch of wool energetically at her kind "How do you do, 'Judge'?"

And on the Burton steps are almost the same group watching the arrival of the train as on that golden September morning. Not quite the same. Miss Lydia is not there, nor the young officer; for Miss Lydia is Mrs. Lieutenant Watson of the barracks, and another officer has taken the lieutenant's place. And Rex is not there, of course, but a figure so much like his is standing in much the same attitude in which she first saw him, that Eunice with difficulty represses an eager start.

They pass through the Iron Gate, and hear it clang behind them, a sound fraught with so many memories, and some of them so sad, that the quick tears spring to Eunice's eyes. And then through Lover's Lane, beautiful in its heavy June leafage, and hallowed ground to Eunice, who feels like one who treads reverently in sacred places.

At the door are Mrs. Charlton and Lucy, the "Big Boys" and the younger children, and, in the background, Alcinda, Charles Cook, junior, and little Cindie. Alcinda's doleful prediction that she would never return had not been fulfilled. Nothing could keep her long away from her loved Bellaire.

What changes four years can make! Mrs. Charlton's glossy curls have many a streak of gray, and the strain of those terrible years shows itself in lines graven by a hard and cruel chisel; but her eyes are as bright and her voice as sweet as of old when she

clasps Eunice in her arms. Lucy shows no signs of care. She has blossomed into a beautiful womanhood, and the greeting of the two girls has lost none of its warmth by so long an absence. The "Big Boys" are almost young men now, and come forward bashfully to shake hands with Miss Eunice. Millie is a shy, graceful girl just entering her teens, and the three younger children have grown out of all recognition, though not of remembrance; and by the time she has shaken hands with Alcinda, Charles Cook, junior, and Cindie, and received their hearty greetings, Eunice feels she has had a royal welcome home.

In the evening she steals away a few minutes from the family circle, who are so happy to have her with them that they can hardly bear to have her out of their sight for a moment, and goes down by the little gate that leads into Lovers' Lane, and there for a few hallowed moments lives over that last meeting with Rex, the most intense hour of all her life, and takes from its hiding-place the little note she received the morning he left Bellaire and reads it over and over with such smiles and tears and ardent kisses that had there been any spectator he would never have recognized the demure and prim little Yankee schoolteacher.

How has her tender heart been torn afresh by revisiting these scenes so allied with memories of him! Every leaf on the trees above her whisper to her of Rex, and, with eyes uplifted to the skies, she breathes now the vows Rex could not compel from her then.

She does not dare to stay long away, but goes back to the parlor and sits in the very chair Rex sat in that December morning when he first told her his love. In her lap sits Baby Ned, a big six-year-old boy, but still the baby, and by her side is Millie, looking with beaming eyes on the Miss Eunice of her childish adoration.

"Where is your shuttle, Eunice?" says the doctor, pleasantly; "I shall not feel you are quite at home until I see that in your hands."

"Oh, I have given up my tatting," Eunice answers, smiling; "I like to sit now with idle hands and dream."

And somehow the doctor and his wife feel that this is an outward sign of an intangible change that has come over Eunice.

She sleeps in her old room that night, and rising early the next morning from restless dreams, she slips quietly down-stairs, and out into the beautiful dewy morning, and wanders around the dear old garden, now a wilderness of roses, greeting every remembered bush and tree, and pinning in her hair a white rose like the one she had once thrown down to Rex.

When it is near enough to breakfast-time to be in no danger of disturbing the sleepers with her music, she goes back to the parlor. The long windows are open on the veranda; the honeysuckle on the lattice is in full bloom, and the room is filled with its fragrance, mingled with the sweet breath of roses from the garden. She has just heard a train pass, and thinks of the early train that bore Rex away that April morning. Her heart is filled with love and longing, and she

sits down to the familiar piano and sings, "Lorena," that old-fashioned song, powerless now to evoke any stronger emotion than a smile of toleration, but new then, and esteemed as the very soul of pathos.

She does not hear a step on the veranda; her whole heart is in the words she is singing. But the step is there, nevertheless, and it belongs to a tall figure clad in a suit of gray evidently new and roughly made, but sitting with a certain grace on the symmetrical form, and in the buttonhole is a dingy bit of ribbon. He carries in his hand his hat, a broad palmetto, and his noble head, covered with thick, dark curls, is bent eagerly forward, listening to the song.

She is singing with infinite tenderness:

> "A duty stern and pressing broke
> The tie that bound thy heart to mine."

After a while he ventures to step inside the window, and still Eunice does not hear him. She is singing now:

> "A hundred months have passed, Lorena,
> Since last I held that hand in mine."

He cannot see her,—she is in the farther parlor,—but he would have fancied the voice was one he had once known, but for the pathos and soul in the tones he had sometimes thought a little hard and cold. He ventures a little farther, where he can see the singer, and still Eunice sings on and neither hears nor sees him. And now she has come to the last verse, and with what holy rapture she sings:

"There is a future--oh, thank God,
Of life this is so small a part!
'T is dust to dust beneath the sod,
But there, up there, 't is heart to heart."

If this is Eunice, it is a more beautiful Eunice than the Eunice of his dreams. The face has grown softer and rounder; the curls, caught back and tied loosely behind, give a more graceful contour to the head; and the brown hair, no longer brushed into severe plainness, ripples in soft waves about the face. He cannot be quite sure it is Eunice: only the clinging gray dress and the white rose in her hair are unchanged. He waits until the last word of her song dies away, and then he says softly:

"Eunice!"

She springs from the piano and looks at him with a startled, unrecognizing glance. There is no mistaking those blue-gray eyes with their long lashes, and quiet even now with that startled look in them. She sees before her a tall, bronzed man with heavy closely trimmed beard, whose dark eyes gaze steadily into hers. There is no boldness in their gaze, and there lurks a sadness in their depths that future years of joy can never wholly drive away. But there is a look of love in them, too, that Eunice has never seen in any other eyes, and at last she knows him. She starts toward him and murmurs "Rex," and then would have fallen, but that he catches her and, holding her in his arms, calls upon her by every endearing name, kissing her forehead, her drooping lids, her hands, but

never once her lips, until she opens her eyes and smiles up at him. And then what does this coy Puritan maiden do, but lift her arms and put them about his neck and whisper, "Rex, I love you, and I will be your wife." And at last he takes from her lips the kiss for which he has been waiting for more than four years.

It is half an hour later. Rex has been warmly welcomed by the family; with shouts of delight from the younger children, who have not forgotten "Cousin Rex"; with shy pleasure by Lucy, who can hardly realize that this bronzed and bearded stranger is the young exquisite of four years ago; and with a handclasp from the doctor more cordial than any Rex had ever received in his college days. But next to Eunice's greeting, Mrs. Charlton's touches him most. She looks up at him, while her dark eyes shine with something softer and brighter than their natural brilliance, and when he would have bent to kiss the hand that trembles in his, she checks him and, putting her arm around his neck just as his mother would have done, whispers, "My dear boy, thank God you have come back to us!" and kisses him as his mother would have kissed him.

Now, a half-hour later, he is sitting at the pleasant breakfast-table, where he sat on that December morning four and a half years before. It is not December now. No glowing fire is filling the room with ruddy warmth. The windows and the glass doors opening on the piazza all stand open wide, and the room is full

of the sweet odors of honeysuckle and roses, and a soft summer zephyr stirs the muslin draperies at the windows flecked with shadows from the great linden outside. He is not now sitting opposite Eunice. Mrs. Charlton has divined at once, though no explanation has been offered, that he has a right to claim the seat she has given him at Eunice's side. He takes it proudly, and there is no attempt at concealment in the tenderness that beams from his eyes whenever they fall upon Eunice, or the love and devotion in his air when he offers her the simplest courtesies of the table.

And as Rex looks around the familiar room, so unchanged, he feels as if the last four years must be some awful dream. Mrs. Charlton, in the excitement of the moment, looks scarcely a day older than when he saw her last. The lines of care and anxiety will return after a while; but joy, the great rejuvenator, has smoothed them all out for the time, and she sits at the head of the table, in the freshest of breakfast-caps and the daintiest of morning gowns, the same beaming and gracious hostess he remembers so well.

As for the doctor—well, the doctor is guilty of one of his most execrable puns, and Mrs. Charlton not only does not frown it down, but hails it as a happy omen. For in the dark and terrible days of the war, when the burden of the college and his own burdens rested so heavily on him, and even the fate of his beloved country seemed sometimes doubtful, the good doctor had almost forgotten how to pun. Now, as Charles Cook, junior, grinning from ear to ear with

delight at "Marse Rex's" return, brings in the fragrant and steaming coffee-pot, the doctor, rubbing his hands slowly with anticipatory delight partly in the delicious draught he is expecting and partly in the pun he is about to perpetrate, says with the old twinkle in his eye:

"Mr. McAllister, during the war we were reduced to drinking pure and unadulterated *rye-oh;* but now, if my olfactory nerves do not *moch-a* me, we can offer you something better."

In his palmiest days the doctor had never made a worse pun, but tears of joy actually stand in Mrs. Charlton's eyes to see him so like his old self once more.

There is much innocent hilarity throughout the meal. Charles Cook, junior's, broad grin expands occasionally into a half-suppressed chuckle of delight, and little Cindie, under the pretext of helping her brother, comes in with a tray, and stands where her round eyes of wonder and admiration never leave Rex's face. Even Alcinda is not willing to be left entirely out. She brings in one plate of waffles herself (and never have Alcinda's waffles been so crisp and delicately browned and altogether perfect as on this morning), and announces her desire of "seeing Marse Mac alive again with her own eyes." Rex shakes hands with her, and his "Howdy, aunty?" has much of the old gay ring in it, while Alcinda stands a minute after he has dropped her hand and shakes her head solemnly:

"You 's shore 'nuff changed, honey. Dunno 's

I 'd 'a' knowed you, you 's got to be sech a fine, hansome genelman.'' At which doubtful compliment everybody laughs, and Alcinda, much abashed or pretending to be, retreats to her kitchen.

But now the happy meal, at which everybody has talked much and eaten little, is over. The big Bible is brought out, the thanksgiving psalm is read, and tenderly and earnestly Dr. Charlton offers up his petition for blessings on the two dear ones, and grateful thanks that ''it has been permitted us to see their faces once more.'' A little hush rests on them all as they rise from their knees, and Alcinda is audibly sniffling—for the Charltons have never departed from the good old custom of having the servants in to family prayers. To cover her weakness she sends Charles Cook, junior, flying for the dish-pan and towels with even more than her usual asperity, and impresses Cindie into the service of helping to clear the table. And in a very few minutes the heavy dishes have all been carried out to the kitchen, and Mrs. Charlton and Lucy, in the whitest of aprons, are deep in the mysteries of ''doing the breakfast dishes''; for no good Southern housewife would omit that after-breakfast ceremony by which she is assured that at least once a day silver and glass and china are as immaculate as plenty of hot water and soap and polishing with clean, dry towels can make them.

It is the beginning of the long summer vacation, and the boys have flown, like arrows released from the bow, the moment prayers are over, and carried Millie with them to show her a bumblebee's nest which they

have discovered in the orchard and which they intend to "take" this morning.

The doctor and Eunice and Rex are lingering in the deep alcove by the open doors, enjoying the sweet sights and sounds and odors of the June morning. Suddenly the doctor turns to Rex:

"Mr. McAllister, I can hardly understand how you came to make us this visit, so soon after the close of the war and with the country still in such an unsettled state. I should think you would have found it very difficult."

"I did find some difficulties, sir," answers Rex. "Many of the railroads are not yet in running order. I had to tramp part of the way, but I generally found an old farm-wagon going my road and got a 'lift.' It 's a slow way to travel,—I have been almost two weeks on the road,—but I did not mind it; I had the hope before me of hearing something of a dear friend at the end of my journey. I would joyfully have footed every step of the way if I had known she was waiting for me here."

Rex speaks with a proud ring in his voice that carries his words to Mrs. Charlton. She drops her tea-towel and listens, her face glowing with eager sympathy. Rex goes on, his dark eyes bent on Eunice, full of love and tenderness, but with a touch of humility and hesitation in their depths, and in the voice that trembles as he speaks, that are very new and strange to see in the proud South Carolinian:

"I hope to take her home with me, doctor; and yet I hardly dare ask her to share the fortunes of a ruined

man, when I had once hoped to surround her with every luxury a queen could command. There is nothing left to me but the land and the old home,—thank God, that did not lie in Sherman's path! A now I must go to work with my own hands and with what brains I possess, if I am ever to recover even a fragment of my shattered fortunes. But if she will go with me, labor will be joy, and no hardship severe enough to prove my love.''

Eunice does not speak, but she turns to him and puts her hand in his, and looks up at him with such love and trust shining in her quiet eyes, it is better than any answer she could have made.

It is Dr. Charlton who speaks, and who for the first time drops the formal ''Mr. McAllister.''

''God bless you, Rex!'' he says earnestly and solemnly; and as he speaks he lays his hand gently on Eunice's brown curls, and so includes her in the benediction.